

การท่งเที่ยวที่เอื้อประโยชน์ต่อคนยากจนในรัฐเคราลา อินเดียตอนใต้:

การนำนโยบายไปปฏิบัติและผลกระทบ



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วิทยานิพนธ์นี้เป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษาตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต

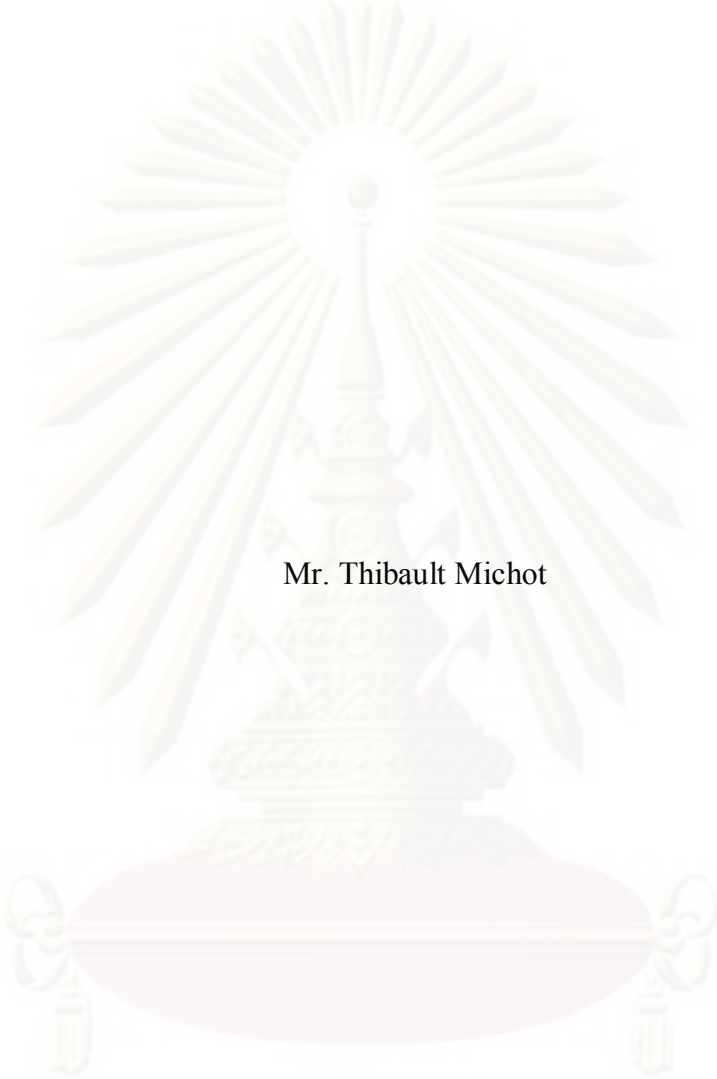
สาขาวิชาการพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ

คณะรัฐศาสตร์ จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

ปีการศึกษา 2552

ลิขสิทธิ์ของจุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

PRO-POOR TOURISM IN KERALA, SOUTH INDIA: POLICY
IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS



Mr. Thibault Michot

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in International Development Studies

Faculty of Political Science

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2009

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Thesis title: PRO-POOR TOURISM IN KERALA, SOUTH INDIA:
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS

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เอ็ม ทีโบธท์ มิเชอท์ : การท่องเที่ยวที่เอื้อประโยชน์ต่อคนยากจนในรัฐคีราลา อินเดีย
 ตอนใต้: การนำนโยบายไปปฏิบัติและผลกระทบ (PRO-POOR TOURISM IN
 KERALA, SOUTH INDIA: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND
 IMPACTS) อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: รศ. ดร. นันทนา ศุภเสนี, 70 หน้า

ทุกวันนี้โลกกำลังประสบกับวิกฤตเศรษฐกิจที่เกิดขึ้นทั่วโลก ในขณะที่อุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยว
 ถูกคาดหวังที่จะยังคงเติบโตในอัตราประมาณ 10% โดยคาดว่าตัวเลขนักท่องเที่ยวต่างชาติจำนวน
 พันล้านคนน่าจะเป็นจริงในปี ค.ศ.2010 จึงเห็นได้ชัดเจนว่าอุตสาหกรรมท่องเที่ยวนี้มีผลกระทบต่อ
 ดำรงชีวิตของผู้คนโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในประเทศกำลังพัฒนาที่ซึ่งการท่องเที่ยวดูเหมือนเป็นโอกาสที่
 ยิ่งใหญ่ต่อการสร้างรายได้ อย่างไรก็ตามอุตสาหกรรมนี้ก็ได้ถูกกำหนดตามหลักการด้านการท่องเที่ยว
 หลายประการที่ไม่เพียงแต่ให้ผลประโยชน์ทางเศรษฐกิจซึ่งส่งผลไม่มากนักต่อชุมชนท้องถิ่นก็ตาม ใน
 หลายกรณีที่การท่องเที่ยวเป็นอันตรายไม่เพียงกับสิ่งแวดล้อมแต่ยังมีผลต่อโครงสร้างสังคม ดังนั้นจะเห็น
 ได้ชัดเจนว่ารัฐต้องทบทวนนโยบายการท่องเที่ยวใหม่ตามทิศทางที่เน้นความยั่งยืนและการรับผิดชอบต่อ
 ด้วยนโยบายดังกล่าว รัฐคีราลาในอินเดียได้ตระหนักถึงประเด็นต่างๆที่เกิดขึ้นจากการท่องเที่ยวและรัฐนี้
 ได้อ้างว่าเป็นผู้ริเริ่มในการกำหนดนโยบายการท่องเที่ยวที่เน้นประโยชน์แก่คนจน ดังนั้นการศึกษานี้มี
 วัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ (1) ดำเนินการประเมินนโยบายการท่องเที่ยวที่เน้นประโยชน์แก่คนจน (2) ประเมินผล
 กระทบที่มีต่อชีวิตของคนในชุมชนและ (3) ค้นหาความเป็นไปได้ในการนำนโยบายนี้ไปใช้ ณ ที่อื่น ผล
 การศึกษาพบว่านโยบายท่องเที่ยวของรัฐคีราลาคือแนวคิดใหม่จริง ตามที่เรียกว่า “แนวคิดการ
 ท่องเที่ยวอย่างรับผิดชอบต่อสังคม” ที่มีตัวชี้วัดความสำเร็จในการลดความยากจนจากกิจกรรมด้านการ
 ท่องเที่ยว รัฐคีราลา กำลังให้ความสนใจในหลักการการท่องเที่ยวเชิงสนับสนุนคนจนและแม้ว่าหลักการนี้
 จะใช้เวลาที่จะแสดงสัมฤทธิ์ผลของนโยบายที่ได้นำไปปฏิบัติในพื้นที่ เช่น โครงการนำร่องคูมาราคัม ที่ได้
 แสดงผลลัพธ์เชิงบวกทางเศรษฐกิจและการสร้างความเข้มแข็งทางสังคมของชุมชน ในทางตรงข้ามความ
 เป็นไปได้ที่จะนำนโยบายที่ปฏิบัติจริงในรัฐคีราลาไปปฏิบัติที่อื่นนั้น ดูเหมือนยังมีคำถามในแง่รัฐได้รับ
 ผลประโยชน์ที่เกิดขึ้นจากนโยบายนี้ในระยะเริ่มต้นซึ่งอาจไม่เป็นไปได้ในทางปฏิบัติ ณ ที่อื่น

สาขาวิชา การพัฒนาระหว่างประเทศ

ปีการศึกษา 2552

ลายมือชื่อ นิสิต.....

ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก.....

##5181008924: MAJOR: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

KEY WORDS: PRO-POOR, TOURISM, RESPONSIBILITY, KERALA, POLICY, IMPLEMENTATION

THIBAUT MICHOT: PRO POOR TOURISM IN KERALA, SOUTH INDIA: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND IMPACTS.

THESIS ADVISOR ASSOC. PROF. NANTANA GAJASENI, PH. D., 70 pp

Nowadays the world is coming through a worldwide economic crisis. Meanwhile the tourism industry is still expected to keep booming at an impressive rate of almost 10%, and the figure of 1 billion international travelers will probably be hit in 2010. Therefore, this sector has consequent impacts on people's lives, especially in developing countries where tourism is seen as a great opportunity to generate income. However, because of the way the industry is ruled, tourism did not bring economic benefit that much to local communities. In many ways, tourism has been harmful not only to the environment, but also to social structures. It is clear that the authorities must redesign their tourism policies toward a more sustainable and responsible direction. The state of Kerala in India is aware of the issues generated by tourism and claims to be a pioneer in designing tourism policies that benefit the poor. Therefore, this study has the objectives to: (a) conduct an evaluation to see what is actually pro-poor in the policy recently implemented by the Kerala Department of Tourism; (b) assess what impacts these policies have on the peoples' lives; and (c) explore the possibility to replicate the model of Kerala to other destinations. The results showed that Kerala's new tourism policies are truly innovative. Under what is called "Responsible Tourism Initiative", there are definitely measures designed to achieve poverty alleviation through tourism activities. Kerala is paying attention to respect the Pro-Poor Tourism principles; and although it takes time to see the efficiency of policies on the field, the pilot project of Kumarakom already showed positive outcomes on economic and social empowerment of the local community. On the other hand, the possibility to replicate what is ongoing in Kerala seems more questionable regarding the state apparently benefited from a set of very favorable initial conditions that may not be possible to find anywhere else.

Field of study: International Development Studies

Academic year: 2009

Student's signature:.....

Advisor's signature:.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the help of many different people. First of all, I would like to thank my thesis supervisor, Ajarn Nantana Gajaseni, for giving me useful advices or tips, and for her patience throughout the all process. Of course, I need to thank all the people who work hard every day to make the MAIDS program so interesting, directors, professors, and officers. But also my fellow MAIDS co-students with whom I honestly hope to keep in touch for the upcoming years.

Then, I am truly grateful to all the people who accepted to hold an interview with me in India, and especially to M. RupeshKumar who granted me so much of his time in Kumarakom, and whose help and support to collect empirical data was priceless. All the people from Kerala I met, who have been depending on the situation, nice, funny, helpful, or surprising but always amazingly welcoming during my stay in their wonderful state.

My parents of course, Alain and Maryse Michot, who gave me even more than what a kid can expect from his parents.

I also need to thanks to M. Jeremy Buclet, who introduced me to the concept of responsible tourism, and with whom I kicked off my life in Bangkok eighteen months ago. Although it is impossible to quote everyone I need to thank, I should not forget people such as Nacim Benchahda, Idir Bouali, Archibald Celeyron, Charles Coquand, Benjamin Dors, or Alex Janssens who all provided me a relevant psychological support throughout the thesis writing process.

And last but not least, I would like to have a very special thanks to Ms. Maleewan Srpaeng who is providing me all the kindness, attention and love that I need.

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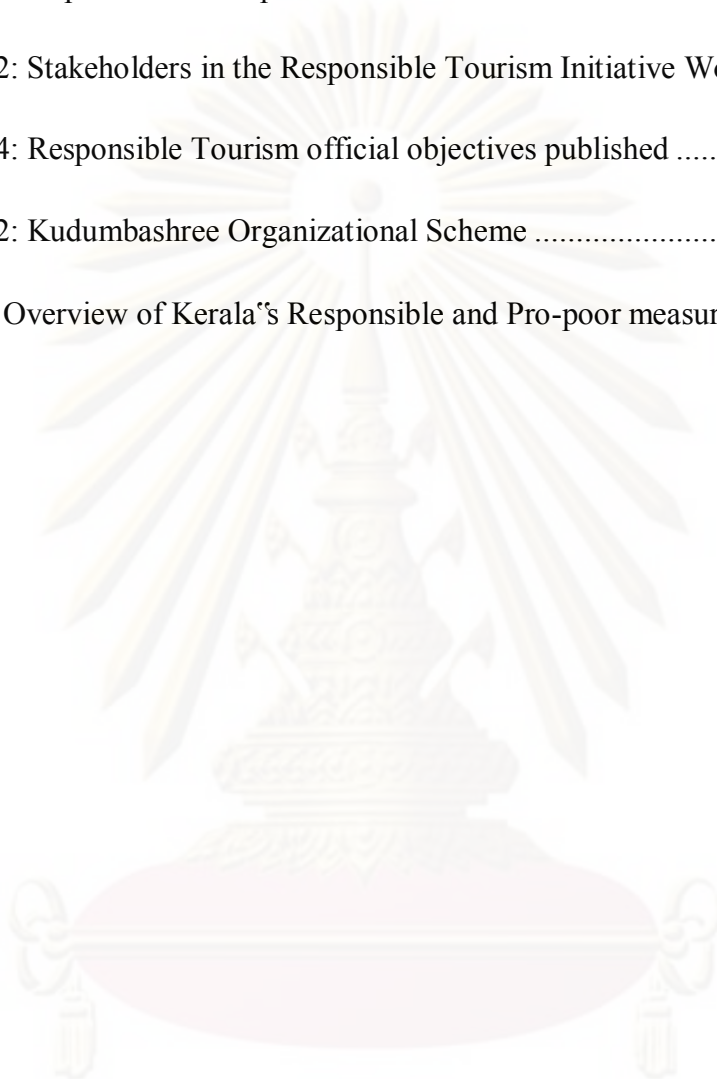
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ABBREVIATIONS

BPL: Below Poverty Line

CBT: Community based tourism

DLRTC: Destination Level Responsible Tourism Committee

FDI: Foreign Direct Investments

ICRT: International Committee for Responsible Tourism

IH&RA: International Hotel and Restaurant Association

ILO: International Labor Organization

KITTS: Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies

LSG: Local Self Government

MSME: Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NOC: Non-Objection Certificate

ODI: Overseas Development Institute

PPT: Pro-Poor Tourism

R&D: Research and Development

RT: Responsible Tourism

SLRTC: State Level Responsible Tourism Committee

STZ: Special Tourism Zone

TNC: Trans National Company

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

UNESCAP: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Recognizing the important dimension and role of tourism as a positive instrument towards the alleviation of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life for all people, the potential to make a contribution to economic and social development, especially of the developing countries and the emergence as a vital force for promotion of international understanding, peace and prosperity.”

United Nations General Assembly;
Global Code of Ethics for Tourism.

Figure 1: Woman riding boat in one of Kumarakom’s canals. (Author’s picture)



Tourism is already the third biggest industry in the world, just behind finance and energy, but more importantly it is the fastest growing one, which gives it a central role for the upcoming years. For the poorest nations, it is seen as great opportunity to generate income. The dream of tourism being able to solve people's economic problems seduces many countries when other opportunities are lacking. And since the industry is expected to keep booming, especially in the developing parts of the world, it will have more and more impact on live hoods of millions of the world's poorest. Besides, this issue is receiving growing attention from international organizations of any type. Tourism is now seen as a powerful potential tool to reduce poverty. In Johannesburg in 2002 during the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the UN and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) realized that such an important and worldwide business can and should play a role in poverty alleviation within the framework of the Millennium development goals.

But until recently, tourism was considered just as another business, and multinational companies or governments used to principally focus on macro economic growth, foreign exchange earnings and private sector expansion; poverty reduction was therefore a secondary interest. It became clear that the growth of the industry through conventional package tourism doesn't trickle down to benefit to the poor. So far tourism has not been an exception to other industries. It has evolved within the neo liberal globalized context and therefore it has a tendency to be strongly exploitative, regarding natural resources or human population as well.

New forms of tourism are intended to overcome this unsustainable and unfair system, but unfortunately long time after the so-called traditional mainstream mass tourism (MMT) heavily impacted environments and people in the South.

I intend to describe how the Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) concept differs from the others; that it can really make the difference by putting poor people at the centre of the strategy, and therefore deserved to get an important role in the poverty agenda.

1.1 Statement of Problem

When looking at the different studies and reports that have been dealing with the Pro Poor Tourism issue, I finally see that in order to be effective, PPT needs a strong back up from governments; “without government intervention it seems unlikely that the dominants actors will change” (Nawijn et al., 2008). The ST-EP Programme and Least Developed Countries: is Tourism the Best Alternative? (Burns and Novelli, 2008). Authorities have to implement policies to regulate the tourism industry and redesign it toward a more equalitarian structure. As highlighted by Ashley (2002), if PPT aims to have a significant impact, it should be integrated to the already existing tourism industry. This crucial point can be realized only if the governments implement policies supporting the development of PPT.

This is specifically on this point that I identify the connection with my research. The Indian state of Kerala claims to be a pioneer in the field of pro poor tourism. It has been one of the first places to design concrete policies clearly referring to PPT. Usually tourism researches focus on the trends, or business and marketing of tourism. Only few studies really explore the political dimension of tourism. The case of Kerala seems to me a great example to analyze the political aspects that exist in tourism.

My goal during my field research was to see how the state of Kerala operates and understands its tourism development, to see what mechanisms have been installed to make tourism pro-poor. I want to explore how policy makers, or other stakeholders playing a role in the tourism industry, are working together to achieve the goals of Pro-Poor and responsible tourism. This will lead to an evaluation of those policies to see if an alternative path from mainstream mass tourism really exists.

1.2 Research Objectives

- To analyze the tourism pro-poor policy recently implemented in Kerala: the history, the road map and the implementation process of the “Responsible Tourism Initiative”; in order to identify the actions used to fight poverty through tourism activities.

- To conduct an evaluation that will lead to know the financial and non-financial benefits, or also see how local communities can be empowered through their connections with the tourism market.
- To analyze the very special context in which this policy takes place. Trying to identify if the PPT policy put in place in Kerala could be replicated elsewhere.

1.3 Research Questions

- a. What is the history of this Pro-poor tourism policy in Kerala?
- b. What is actually pro-poor in the Kerala “Responsible Tourism Initiative”?
- c. Who are the different stakeholders of this program, and what are their roles?
- d. What are the concrete impacts on the poor people, how efficient these policies are on poverty alleviation?
- e. Is Kerala a so specific case, or is it possible to replicate it somewhere else?

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Study site

Even if tourism is nowadays widely recognized to be a potential powerful tool for development and poverty reduction by numerous economists, scholars or development workers, there is still little literature and on the field it is still at an early stage of development. Couples of small-scale projects have already proved efficiency, at community or regional level (Bhutan, Costa Rica, The Gambia and Namibia). The State of Kerala wants to implement pro-poor tourism policies and projects at the state level; this characteristic makes the Kerala a pioneer concerning PPT.

With its catchy motto: “God’s own country”, and the numerous awards the state already received which National Geographic (2002) recognized Kerala among the 50 greatest places to visit in a lifetime. Kerala is attracting more and more tourists every year (+13% per year) at an even faster rate than India is (+9% per year). Kerala is paying attention to have a clever and careful tourism management, to make sure it will be environmentally, economically, and socially responsible. Besides, Kerala is

for long time already recognized for having a different and efficient model of development within India, and not only about tourism. This is the only state in India to be ruled by a socialist government, paying attention to have a fair and sustainable development strategy.

In order to achieve these objectives of sustainability, poverty reduction and fair redistribution through tourism activities, the state of Kerala clearly and officially designed policies to rule tourism from a responsible and sustainable standpoint, through Pro-Poor tourism principles. Those objectives are clearly defined in VISION 2025, and more specifically within the frame of the Responsible Tourism Initiative (RT), born in 2006.

All of these characteristics and specificities make Kerala a very unique and particularly interesting case to study the concrete impacts of Pro-Poor tourism policies and initiatives. As Hall (1994) declared that “tourism policies tend to focus on notions of prescription, efficiency and economy rather than ideals of equality and social justice”. I want to find out how different tourism policies designed by the state of Kerala are from that.

1.4.2 Data Collection

➤ Where and When

In order to realize my research on the field, I spent 25 days in the state of Kerala, sparing my time between Thiruvananthapuram and the wonderful village of Kumarakom. In Thiruvananthapuram, the administrative heart of the state; it was the right place to get access to documents, to meet official people working for tourism related organizations (governmental or non-governmental). Then, in Kumarakom, I have been able to get deeper into the field and the reality, I have been able to see how the policies designed in Thiruvananthapuram are applied on the ground, and how do they impact people.

➤ Problem approach and methods

Here, I will present why did I chose to work on this topic and how I selected a relevant location for the fieldwork. I have now to describe the way I collected the information, how I approached this issue and the methodological framework I used to achieve my goals and to extract or analyze data from the field.

During my course of International Development Studies in Chulalongkorn University I became aware and gained knowledge on many different issues and I especially was very interested in topics such as conflict resolution, politics of public policy or development project management for instance. Those classes changed my thoughts and opened my mind about what I now consider as important issues for development in today's society. For example, in the conflict resolution class, I learnt about the power relations that can exist between the different stakeholders during a situation; with the public policy course, I gained valuable knowledge of how the authorities or local governments can make things better for their citizens; additionally I started to dig on my thesis topic when I tried to build a project proposal related to eco tourism for the development project management class. All these issues are definitely connected to Pro-Poor tourism, and I want to see how it can be applied to my field research in Kerala. This fieldtrip in India provided me the opportunity to interact with the different actors of the tourism industry in Kerala, such as the policy makers, people working in tourism studies, business owners, NGO workers, and of course the local community.

In order to answer my research questions, I had to know more about the tourism industry today (Mainstream Mass Tourism), its neoliberal features and why there is a need to run tourism on a more socially responsible way. From there, I studied the already existing literature, studies and theories related to the pro-poor tourism concept. And finally, I needed to illustrate this by doing a field research in a place where the government is aware that tourism, in order to bring benefits to the poor people, and to be socially and economically sustainable, has to be managed on a different way.

To analyze my findings about those theories, and in a certain way to challenge it with the reality of the field, I use a descriptive approach through a case study. A descriptive approach is a method that explains, “How things are” at a certain time. It is like a picture of a situation. First of all, I intend to describe “how things are” from the local government, NGOs, and local people standpoints, and after I would be able to answer my research questions of what is pro-poor in Kerala’s tourism policies, and how it does impact the people.

There are different approaches possible for a field research. I chose to use a qualitative approach; it is, I think, the better way to have a clear understanding of the peoples’ view over a situation. In order to be more accurate I wanted to find details and nuances from each interviews; and for this a descriptive and qualitative approach with open questions in which the interviewee is in a non-threatening context seems to me to be the best way. Semi-structured interviews are the most common and recommended practice for tourism market and behaviors research.

➤ Semi structured interviews

For semi structured interviews, the people who is interviewed has the freedom to answer what does he wants; it is made of open questions that do not necessarily come in a specific order. If the respondent has a lack of knowledge for answering a question, he can answer whatever he feels with his own words. Even if for semi structured interviews there is a prepared set of questions, it is possible that the interview evolves and takes new directions depending on what the interviewee answers or how he reacts. So, it is always possible that new and unexpected questions arrive later. These techniques are conversation-like; there is reciprocity of exchange issues during the research process. This kind of interactions is open and there is not really prepared questions, just a theme or some rough ideas. In that perspective the interviewer and the interviewee become co-researchers. I chose this type of interview because I think it is the best way to build confidence and trust, I feel more interested in the idea of having cooperation with the interviewee, so that both of us will benefit and gain knowledge from the research process.

Here follows some principles or guidelines for qualitative semi structured interviews that applied during this study (Seidman, 1991).

- Listen more than talk
- Ask for elaboration
- Use open-ended questions
- Try not to interrupt
- Show attention, listen carefully and be genuine
- Pay attention to non-verbal reactions (body and movements gestures, changes in voices pitch or volume, eyes expression)

All the interviews conducted have been audio recorded; I just took few written notes about the attitudes or reactions of the interviewee during the process. By this way, people are not interrupted and it makes them more confident, and so the result is more authentic.

Through personal experiences, observations and diary I also did what could be called self-interview, by auto-recording or field notes.

1.5 Scope of the Study

I recognize that tourism, in order to be sustainable, has to be driven through three different angles, ecological, social and economical. But in my research I want to focus only on the socio-economic aspects of the policies adopted by the state of Kerala. As well, I totally understand that the ecological dimension is something crucial. But there is already abundant literature and case studies dealing with the environmental responsibility of tourism and much lesser with the socio-economic aspects. That is the reason why I decided to focus my research and the social and economic responsibilities.

As said already, the case study method intends to describe a situation at a certain time in a certain location. Within the frame of the Responsible Tourism Initiative, four pilot destinations have been identified in Kerala. Following the advices of tourism policy makers, I only investigated in the village of Kumarakom. They

explained me that this is where the policies are the most effective, better implemented and where the project is overall the most advanced.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Tourism policies chosen by a government heavily impact the population. Whereas plenty of harmful cases over the local communities have been reported, this thesis intend to demonstrate through a case study that if the tourism policies are designed with a pro-poor perspective, local people could really benefit from tourism activities. Even if of course there are still a couple of issues that remain to be addressed, optimistically, the study of the Kerala Responsible Tourism Initiative, and the study of the Kumarakom village pilot project is expected to show to tourism policy planners, or tourism business operators what kind of measures should be implemented to make a destination a better place to live in and a better place to visit.

More realistically, this study could contribute to the available literature on PPT that still has a tiny size. Then this case study could be also, I hope, be used as a base by any independent researcher, tourism institute or NGO who would like to conduct a study about what is pro-poor or what is not in any other destinations.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

Personally, I strongly believe in the Pro-Poor Tourism concept and I honestly think that tourism authorities should try to incorporate in their policies similar actions that have been implemented in Kerala. So, in order to stick with my principles, during my field research in India I tried my best to behave as a Responsible tourist myself. This means to always choose home-stays, or small-sized and locally run accommodations or restaurants, in order to bring to the local communities benefits, and in order to avoid leakages that occurs when people stay in large and internationally owned businesses. *“Think Responsible, Think Local.”*

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the first part of the literature review, I will look at how harmful mass tourism has been, as well for environment, culture or for exploiting poor peoples. I will describe some of these negative impacts and also look at the structural inequalities that shape the tourism industry. Then I will jump to the main objective this study is focusing on: Pro poor tourism (PPT). In the core of the literature review, I intend to describe how this concept differs from the others; that it can really make the difference by putting poor people at the center of the strategy, and therefore deserved to have a priority place on the poverty agenda.

I want to see if an alternative path from mainstream mass tourism really exists. How the industry and the governments can learn from the past mistakes? Can Pro-poor tourism make the difference about the living conditions of millions of people?

But all those nice ideas had already raised important questions and critiques. A strong critique is that this PPT model doesn't actually take distance from neo liberal model, and that the tourism actors may manipulate the PPT concept as a marketing tool under the humanitarian banner. This will be explained in the third and last part concerning the literature review.

2.1 Mainstream Mass Tourism (MMT)

The massive increase of international travelers and the boom of tourism development is a direct result of the globalization process. Globalization is the free flow across borders of capital, labor, currencies, and ideas and of course people. It began in the 50s" with the birth of high capacity airplanes, then it became a trend and something usual from the 90s". Through Internet, tourism definitely became global and massive, with low-cost holidays and travels available anywhere on the Web; most of people from developed countries can now afford standardized trips to Asia, Africa or Latin America. In the 50s" the number of international travelers was about 25

million of people, and it is expected to reach 1.56 billion tourists visiting a foreign country in 2020.

- Since the 50s^{cc} it grew at an average rate of 7% worldwide, and 11% in less developed countries.
- In 1950, 25 millions of international tourists. 870 Millions in 2007, and 2010 is expected to hit the figure of 1 billion of travelers.
- Each year, tourists spend 11% more money within their holidays.
- The total industry in 2007 was about US\$ 750 billion
- If we include air transportation, tourism represents 40% of export services.
- For the 50 poorest nations, tourism is always in the top 3 contributors of economic development.
- In 2005, tourism was the primary source of foreign exchange earnings in 90% of the poorest countries.

(United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2008)

The tourism sector, as it is designed and operated, is a direct product of the Neo-Liberal ideology because it can only flourish in an extremely open and deregulated economic environment. Hardly any other business represents such a power of Trans National Companies (TNC). The most widely recognized negative impact of MMT is the economic redistribution unfairness. *“In some developing countries, more than two-thirds of the revenue from international tourism never reaches the local economy because of the high foreign exchange leakages.”* (Muqbil, 2005). These structures directly impact people *“Conditions of work are very difficult, close to exploitation, characterized by low wages, over dependency on tips, marathon working hours, stress and pressures, lack of secure contracts, poor training and almost no promotion opportunities”* (Beddoe, 2004). Additionally we can point out the problem of child labor, that is more important in the tourism sector than in many others. According the International Labor Organization (ILO), up to 10% of the tourism working force in tourism is made of children.

Considering the fact that tourists spend money in accommodation, entertainment, food, transportations or manufactured goods and services, this is often seen as a profitable industry for a country and an important source of currency for the local economy. But it remains the question where the money goes. The problem of what is called leakage is one of the strongest critiques made to mainstream mass tourism. A leakage is when the money generated by tourism activities doesn't stay in the destination, but is taken away instead. This can happen for several reasons, and is always linked to the MMT features characterized by neo-liberal principles. First, leakages happen when the owner of a tourism business (usually hotel chains, big resorts) repatriates the money to another country, where the company is from. So, the money is earned in a place but another benefit from it (Lansing and De Vires, (2007). Secondly leakages happen when goods or services are not produced and bought locally but are imported. And most of the time, international resort companies import foods and beverages to satisfy western customers who are not aware of these issues.

The ultra competitiveness of tourism sector makes local people highly vulnerable. Less developed countries destinations for which tourism plays a crucial role about foreign exchange earnings and income have to compete against each other in order to attract international tourists; and their best tool to offer attractive prices is to reduce the cost of labor. In order to attract foreign direct investments (FDI), less developed countries often deregulate their labor policies, it tends to create jobs for sure, but very low skilled ones, with low wages no security.

Examples of bad policies of deregulation taken by governments to attract foreign investors are numerous; let's have a look at the case of Ghana for instance. The government of Ghana devaluated the Cedi (local currency) to attract more tourism investors and more tourists. The number of international visitors actually increased, but there was very little benefit to the local economy. Then, finally this policy led to a catastrophic situation: first it generated a high leakage, so there were few gains for the economy of Ghana, but there were other strong negative impacts: for example it became very difficult to the Ghanaians people to buy imported products such as medicines. (Konadu-Agyemang, 2001).

It looks like mainstream mass tourism is working like international trade does: it is still caught in the same logic of the poor countries trying to seduce western ones to sell their goods, products or services. Very influent lobby groups, such as hotel corporations (IH&RA: International Hotel & Restaurant Association, being the most famous one) with strong political connections to local governments, or powerful investors are running the tourism industry. Foreign companies come to developing countries, create resorts and facilities based on local wonders on which the local communities lose control. These attitudes strongly remind colonialism and then mass tourism is nowadays compared as a new form of imperialism.

A couple of decades ago, E. Hyde, a black-power political leader from Belize said this shocking sentence “*Tourism is whorism*”. It can actually be understood at the literal or the figurative sense.

The loss of traditional and indigenous values is a strong critique made to MMT. Local peoples, and more specifically the youth, change their attitudes, behaviors or values by imitating the tourists. In order to respond to business expectations, the culture becomes commoditized; local people change and bastardize their culture to make it more easily understandable for the tourists; then the culture is reduced or become just folklore. For example, religious or traditional rituals are sometimes modified or sanitized to conform to tourist expectations. This practices strongly reinforced stereotypes, and often, local indigenous complexity is reduced to a handicraft business. When children earn more money than their parents who are not able to work with the tourists; tourism can also creates damages to family structures. In plenty of cases, prostitution and drug consumption increased alongside with the growth of the tourism sector.

In order to develop tourism projects, infrastructures need to be created; roads, airports, hotels, attraction sites, or nature reserves must be built. Tourism development in the majority of cases will increase the prices of the land; plenty of examples exist where local people are not able anymore to afford to stay in their own homes and have to sell it to companies operating tourism business (Cooper et al, (2005). The massive urban slums in big city outskirts where living conditions are

terrible are a direct result of this land price inflation. Urbanization and migration from rural areas to cities also generate transformation of lands. Intensive large-scale tourism focusing on the income generation is obviously making an overdrive use of natural resources, leading to ecological and social problems. Local people may lose access to their natural resources to make place to tourism facilities. For example, in Boracay, in The Philippines, foreign corporations promoting intensive tourism now own 40% of the island. These resorts need a considerable amount of water to operate their businesses, and then natural resources become over exploited. This has led to crisis in water supply.

2.2 The Pro Poor Tourism concept (PPT)

During the middle of the eighties, emerged new ideas about how different tourism could be operated. Ecotourism is nowadays a broad picture, and gathers numerous concepts such as Nature Tourism which aims at discovering natural wonders by minimizing the impacts of people on environment; adventure tourism, or more recently ethnic tourism, which takes the tourist into a cultural immersion within local indigenous communities. All these new form of tourism are much more concerned with ecological and cultural conservation than poverty reduction. It aims more at minimizing costs on people lives rather than bringing benefits to them. In Eco tourism many actors pursue initiatives that have beneficial environment impacts, but those impacts are of secondary importance for the poor (Cattarinich, 2005).

PPT put poverty reduction at the center, bringing net benefit to the poor is the goal and expanding the opportunities is the mean. (Ashley et al., 2002). Pro poor tourism does not only aim at generating additional income to poor people, although it wouldn't differ from charity. It aims to provide the poor capacity building and skills transfer to generate additional income from themselves, through tourism activities. Thus PPT works closely with education and training, or with microfinance.

PPT differs from all other concepts because it is not just a new product or a new niche market under the Ecotourism umbrella. It is a holistic approach to address the problems and the needs of the poor. The United Nations Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) said that it is possible for almost any tourism attraction or product to meet pro poor tourism objectives.

PPT principles can be applied to any scales, micro or macro. It is a matter of redistribution, not creating a new tourism product. PPT is a shift of power that is required to achieve poverty reduction through tourism (Mowforth et al. (2007). Therefore, a pro-active interventionist approach is needed from the governments.

PPT has a holistic notion of poverty alleviation. Non-economic benefits are as much important. An improved management of tourism industry can provide new skills, better access to education and health care, improving infrastructural access to clean water and transportation networks. Intangible benefits may also be provided as well: access to information, opportunities to communicate with the outside world, better access to market opportunities, strengthening the community institutions and structures, building community pride. (Roe, 2002).

PPT differs from existing alternatives tourism because it doesn't only focus on the local level, which is the limit of the respectable CBT (Community based tourism) concept. Because usually poor and remote people are lacking skills to negotiate with tourism companies, the authorities have to promote their interests. It is a primary objective to change the governments' policies. Without such actions at the macro level, PPT may remains a niche market with nothing but numerous community run bungalow style businesses; which is good for marginal benefit of a particular community but which doesn't address the larger picture of poverty reduction objective.

➤ Reasons why tourism can reduce poverty:

- This is a diverse industry with a wide range of activities, and so can include people from informal sector.
- Tourism is dependent upon natural resources (landscapes, wildlife, and outdoor activities) and upon culture diversity. These are assets that can be available for the poor people, and that can be turned into resources.

- It is a labor-intensive activity, meaning that even the less qualified people can find job in a tourism related business.
- Traditionally and compared to other sectors of activity, a higher share of women, who are frequently from the poorer groups, is working in tourism businesses.
- Can bring market and financial benefits to remote and marginal rural areas.
- Non-financial benefits (community empowerment, access to infrastructures and resources, participation in the decision making process), are very important for poor people, it can reduce vulnerability.
- PPT goes beyond community tourism because it involves planning, policy and investment.

➤ **Stakeholders and their role in PPT:**

The authorities

- To consult the residents when a project is expected to come in an area.
- Use control and incentive measure to increase private sector commitment.
- Support small businesses
- Taxes for the improvement of the environment, road construction, sanitation or health improvements to benefit the local people, building of a school. And provide security to resource management.

The private sector

- Use local suppliers and staff, and provide support to local enterprises and establish local partnerships.
- Consult poor people about how to respect local guidelines.
- Promote the PPT concept in their marketing and advertising strategies to raise customer's awareness.

The poor people

- Increase their understanding of the tourism industry, develop skills for small business management.
- Explore options for developing cultural products.
- Strengthen the community organization, transparency in the management of assets and benefits.

Civil society and NGOs

- Acting to make links between stakeholders.
- Investing in training and technical assistance in collaboration with the government.
- Developing process to make poor peoples' interests included in the policies.

2.3 Critiques and Limits of Pro Poor Tourism

Even if PPT is quite a new concept, it already met critiques from writers and scholars. Hall (2006) pointed out that PPT doesn't offer anything really new innovative because it aims at being integrated in the existing neo liberal structures that shape the tourism industry.

PPT proposes an alternative way to provide additional income that may works, but after all it remains a very simplistic and mainstream view of improving peoples' living standards and daily lives. Generating cash doesn't mean that it will necessarily lead to an improved lifestyle from a qualitative standpoint. A connection can be made with the critiques encountered by the Microcredit concept and Nobel Prize Muhammad Yunus, the founder of the widely appreciated Grameen Bank (the first bank having implemented microcredit). Whereas Yunus claims *"If we can come up with a system which allows everybody access to credit while ensuring excellent repayment - I can give you a guarantee that poverty will not last long"*. Microcredit and PPT concepts have a narrow view of improving peoples' lives. Rather than promoting education or training, it simply focuses on earning money as quick as

possible with a self-employment perspective (Neff, 1997). Both critiques, of microcredit and PPT, lead to the same outcome. It strongly remains included into Neo liberalism ideology of entrepreneurialism and privatization, and totally forgets to include a welfare standpoint.

As any other “green business”, what is sustainable and how to achieve it; is defined by the North. Multinational companies have a growing access to the eco business, and we can fear a privatization of the biodiversity. The same critique can be applied to PPT; as long as the hotel lobbies from rich and powerful nations are going to design the rules and the principles of tourism, nothing will change. Any concept of “new tourism” will be nothing but a new business, or a mean to expand the size of the overall industry. Under this perspective PPT is seen as a new marketing tool. Tourism companies operating in MMT are already using the “green” or “eco” buzzwords in their packages; and could manipulate PPT to serve self-interest under the sake of humanitarian actions.

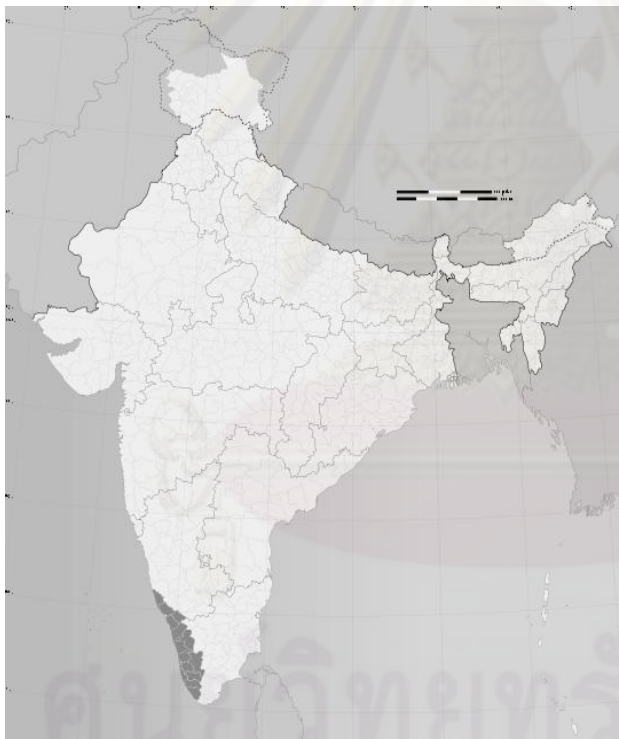
CHAPTER III

FIELD RESEARCH

3.1 General Information about Kerala

The state of Kerala, located on the southwest shore of the country already became a leading destination in India. Before going deeper into Kerala tourism policies and to highlight challenges or the already achieved pro-poor initiatives, it is necessary to have an overview of Kerala's historic, geographic, or cultural features.

Figure 3.1 Kerala's geographical situation (map retrieved from Wikipedia)



The population of Kerala is around 32 million inhabitants, which is a micro share of India's population; but its density is one of the highest in the country with 820 people/square kilometer. Malayalam is the official and most commonly spoken language. The official and administrative capital city is Thiruvananthapuram, the economic and historic heart is

Kochi, which has been a world-trading hub since ages, for the Dutch, the Portuguese, the British, the Arabs or the Chinese. Rubber, spices, tea, or the marine industry were for long time Kerala's main sectors. The tourism industry emerged during the beginning of the 70s; nowadays it has become an important source of income and contributed up to 9% of the state economic activity. Located between the Arabian Sea and the Western Ghats mountains, Kerala is blessed with wonderful natural

attractions. The backwaters, a beautiful network of canals, rivers and lakes are the state's star attraction. But the reasons that push people to visit Kerala can be very diverse. The state has it all: beautiful beaches with nice underwater wildlife, remote traditional hills villages hidden in the tea plantations, mystic lush forests inhabited by unique tropical birds species, and last but not least, the legendary Bengal Tiger. If Kerala has great natural attractions, people do not only come for this reason: historic monuments, temples, pilgrimage sites, boat races, tasty cuisine and Ayurveda centers (the traditional Indian native medicine) are also what make this state so attractive. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kerala>) In 2002, the worldwide famous magazine National Geographic identified Kerala as "*One of the 50 must-see destination in a lifetime*". Kerala well deserved its nickname of "God's own country".

The state of Kerala is very singular within India. In 1957 it became the very first place in the world where a communist government was freely elected, and since this date, left wing governments have always held the power. This socialist orientation had a huge influence over Kerala's development strategy. Even if like any other Indian state, Kerala is characterized by an impressive plurality and diversity – geographic, religion, language, or economic conditions - the state of Kerala holds a very distinctive place among other Indian states, and Kerala has for long time already been considered as a model of development. Whereas elsewhere in India, the focus is on economic, industrial and technologic success, Kerala has always emphasized its development on democratic governance, social justice and human development. This is not surprising that the state of Kerala is considered as the more left wing in India, and this may explains the alternative development strategy used by the Keralan government. If Kerala is less impressive considering economic and technological growth than the majority of other states in India, when looking at human development or social indicators" Kerala have high scores.

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Table 3.1: Comparative development data between Kerala and India

<u>Indicators</u>	<u>Kerala</u>	<u>India</u>
• Population below poverty line (%) (< 2\$ / day)	13	26
• Sex Ratio (M:F)	1:1.058	1:0.933
• Literacy (%)	91(94m/88f)	65(76m/54F)
• Rural female literacy (%)	87	47
• Life expectancy at birth (years)	73	61
• Child Mortality rate (per 1000)	14	68
• Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000)	198	407
• Total fertility rate (children per women)	2	3

Source: UNDP, 2006. Kerala Human Development Report 2005

To understand how tourism policies in Kerala as a pioneer in India match with the wider development strategy of the state, therefore; it has been the first state to identify tourism as crucial topic. The state of Kerala firstly designed an explicit tourism policies and objectives, which the highlight of policy claims to be the home of sustainable tourism with a focus on pro-poor initiatives.

3.2 Pro-Poor Tourism Policies in Kerala

Pro-poor, or responsible tourism is becoming a hot topic nowadays and is increasingly popular; but so far it remains a buzz, still few literature is available and only a couple of places in the world are really implementing initiatives matching with pro-poor tourism principles. Therefore, the state of Kerala is selected for this study as one of these few places implementing pro-poor, responsible and sustainable measures within the state's tourism policies. Here follows the detailed steps taken by the Kerala Department of Tourism to implement the pro-poor tourism policies, officially known as Responsible Tourism Initiative (RT). During all the study, the terms Responsible and Pro-Poor will be synonyms; pro-poor tourism is commonly used as the generic name, whereas in the case of Kerala, the Department of Tourism uses the term Responsible to brand its pro-poor tourism policies.

3.2.1 Presentation of the Interviewees

- Dr. Venu, the first secretary of the Department of Tourism in Kerala, is the head of the tourism affairs in the state. He is the one who started the Responsible Tourism initiative, and who has the final word for any project. He is personally involved in this project and strongly believes in. He reports the projects, and what is going on with the tourism situation, directly to the Indian Minister of Tourism.
- Dr. Vijayakumar (M.A in economics, PhD in Eco Tourism) is the principal of the Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies (KITTS). I decided to meet him because I thought it could be relevant to know more about what is taught to the Keralan students who plan to work in the tourism industry. It can be a good piece of information about the future of the tourism activities in the state. Besides, I wanted to learn about the other activities of the institute and also to get Sir Vijayakumar's personal opinion about responsible and pro-poor tourism activities.
- Mr. Saroop Roy is the state networking coordinator for Equations. Equations were as founded in 1985 in Bangalore, Karnataka. It is a research, campaigning,

advocacy and lobbying organization dealing with the democratization of tourism by upholding the principles of equity, social justice and sustainability. The Kerala branch was started after it has been reported an unfair and unsustainable Tourism operation in Wayanad, Northern Kerala. In order to build tourism facilities (resorts, trails, lodges) in the natural park, local indigenous communities were evicted. The question of who benefits tourism is central to Equations' work. In order to report to the government what is wrong in the tourism development, but also to influence the policies toward a more responsible and participatory way, Equations builds networks of people (local communities, academics or independent researchers, trade unions, grass-root organizations, local self governments). Equations by reporting dysfunctions are trying to break this unfair existing system of decision-making.

- Mr. Prasanth has been a social development specialist for the Great India Tourism planners, which is an organization offering consulting services for the Department of Tourism and that have done several projects in tourism. He is nowadays the state coordinator of the Responsible Tourism policies. Mr. Prasanth is a research scholar in Social Work. He has been working in international aid and project management with emphasis on Social and Community Development, experience in diagnosis of social needs. And more importantly for this study, he is also an expert in implementation of Responsible Tourism initiative at the grass root level.
- Mr. Sumesh Mangalassary is the head of Kabani Tours, and has been working with the tourism issues for more than 10 years. This organization doing independent researches and is as well making up tours by strictly sticking to pro-poor tourism principles. They organize a tour in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary. This project is part of a village development program and 50% of the total income is given back to the visited local community. This tourism activity is truly participative, the local people decide themselves about what do they want to share with the tourists, or how many people they want to welcome in their villages. Kabani was started in 2006, under Mr. Sumesh initiative, when he saw the case of

a lodge in Wayanad where there was no participation at all from the local community, and where the people did not benefit from the tourism activities.

- Mr. Rupesh Kumar is the destination level coordinator for the Kumarakom Responsible Tourism Initiative. Rupesh is the one who deals with the situation in the field. He has a strong understanding of what is going on there, he knows personally all the local people included in the project. He used to be the leader of the student union of Kerala, and a prominent activist for social justice in the state. Now, besides being the destination coordinator, he is also elected at the Kumarakom Panchayat (local self government). He definitely holds a key position in the RT initiative.

3.2.2 Responsible Tourism Initiative Road Map

Kerala, throughout India, is known to be a new ideas or practices setter on many aspects. According to Mr. Saroop Roy, the state coordinator of Equations, a Bangalore based non-profit organization established for research, training and the promotion of responsible tourism, the state's first step toward a real PPT model in Kerala was taken in 2006. Under the demonstration of Equations, the Department of Tourism understood, and was willing to accept the negative impacts of tourism over the people and the environment. It was recognized that the first step to adopt the principles of Responsible Tourism would be an extensive consultative exercise, which would determine the contours of the overall strategy. The Kerala department of Tourism decided to build up a plan about responsible tourism, and asked for help to identify key problems from ICRT India (International committee for responsible tourism), and from Equations. So, was started a discussion platform on a participatory approach, with every stakeholders, scientists, NGOs, business owners, communities representatives, local self government, independent researchers, scholars, Kudumbashree (see later), and politicians. The Kerala Department of Tourism showed good will to bring together diverse opinions and people, to make sure there was a clear and ongoing dialogue between the different stakeholders. A two day workshop

was held in Thiruvananthapuram on the 2nd and 3rd of February 2007. This baseline was called the State Level Responsible Tourism Committee, SLRTC, consisting of 40 members with representation from the different stakeholder groups. The SLRTC was created to take forward the issues that were discussed during the workshop. From this day the state of Kerala definitely considered this topic as crucial for its development strategy.

SLRTC identified role:

- Provide framework for Responsible tourism programs.
- Strategic planning of projects
- Provide detailed and absolutely transparent policies
- To be a platform for discussions between the different stakeholders

On the 21st April 2007, another meeting was held with the SLRTC members to discuss the modalities of taking the initiative forward. It was first decided to implement the initiative in certain destinations; those four destinations would be the pilot experiences, working as a kind of laboratory. After having identified key points, issues, strengths and weaknesses, decided to implement pilot initiatives in 4 different destinations across the state of Kerala:

- Kovalam: the beach destination
- Kumarakom: the backwater destination
- Thekkady and Wayanad: Hills and backcountry destinations.

Then, destination level responsible tourism committees (DLRTC) were created in those 4 destinations.

The 4 DLRTC have for objectives to:

- Monitor and manage projects.
- Ensure implementation of Responsible tourism in the destination.
- Coordinate the working groups.
- Ensure accountability and transparency at the lower level.

In order to review the progress achieved by the Responsible Tourism initiative, a meeting was held on the 10th August 2007. Here follows the outcomes.

- Working Groups on Economic, Social and Environmental responsibilities were born.
- The Working Group on Economic Responsibility has identified strategies on concerning the relation between the local people and the tourism industry.
- Kudumbashree, the State Poverty Eradication Mission, was identified as the partner to take local production initiatives forward.

After nearly a year of efforts in consultations and preparatory work, the Kerala Responsible Tourism Initiative was formally kicked off on 14th March 2008 at Kumarakom. The RT initiative of Kerala claims to be unique in its attempt to cover pro-poor tourism issues holistically. But we have to admit that the process had to overcome numerous barriers; stakeholders who were initially skeptical participants finally figured out how to solve complex problems with innovative local and multilateral solutions.

A first step has been taken. The most important result of the year long exercise is that a platform for multilateral dialogue and a working plan has been established on the ground, in which all stakeholders, by a meaningful engagement, recognize the roles they have to play and the issues they need to take care. The figure 3.2 represents the organizational scheme of the Responsible Tourism Initiative. Following the progress that has been made in establishing a working model for pro-poor tourism through the RT initiative the Department of Tourism hopes that its principles regarding the tourism activities will be one day adopted in other places in India as well.

Figure 3.2: Responsible Tourism Initiative Organizational Scheme

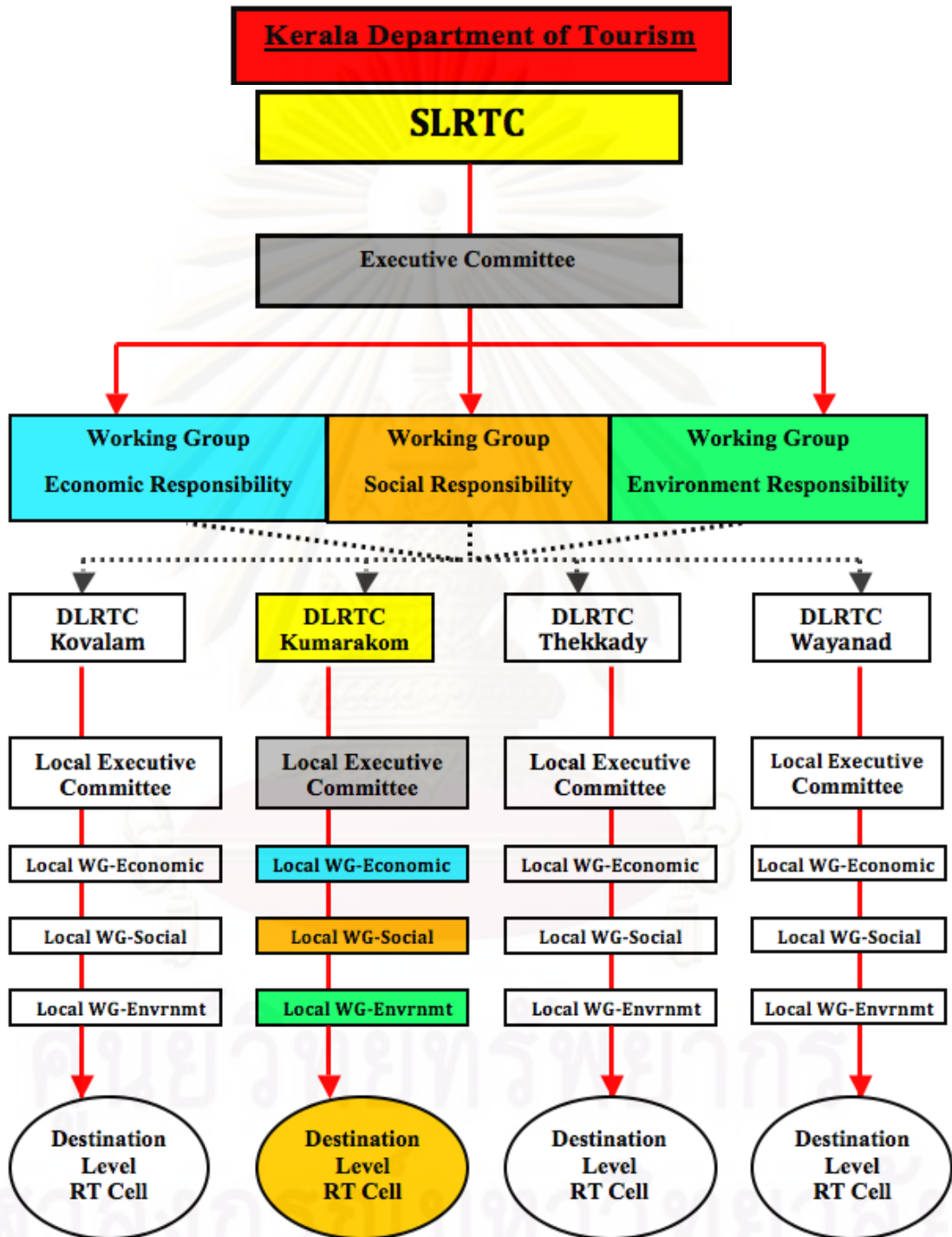


Table 3.2.2: Main stakeholders from the Responsible Tourism Initiative Workshop

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Tourism First Secretary: Dr. V. Venu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLRTC coordinator: Mr. Prasanthkumar Nellickal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Committee is made of: (among others)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Equations represented by Mr. Saroop Roy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ International Committee Responsible Tourism India (ICRT India) represented by Mr. Sreekumar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kudumbashree represented by Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS) represented by Dr. Vijayakumar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Engineering and Technical Advisers Board represented by Mr. Uv Jose
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DLRTC coordinator in Kumarakom: Mr. Rupesh Kumar

3.2.3 Identification of issues and objectives

Within the SLRDC, three sub working groups were created in order to challenge the different stakeholders' opinions (Local self government and civil society organization group; Tourism Industry group; Government group). The three groups were asked to identify the inappropriate policies and projects that already

occurred in Kerala, to identify the current issues, and also to set new objectives for the RT Initiative.

Concerning the economic and social issues, the working group made of people from the local self government and NGOs identified four problems. First, they said that the STZ (special tourism zones) that were created 10 years ago bring inequalities between places and then should be banned. It also created an over dependence on tourism in these destinations. NGOs workers, stated that too much importance should not been given to foreign tourists, it can lead to a socio-cultural breakdown. The Panchayat (local self government) recognized that they should be more involved for building economic bridges between the industry and the local people; the Panchayat should actively lobby to the hotels to hire local laborers. This working group also reported that the tourism industry in Kumarakom has ignored the labor standards in many cases. Besides, they also discussed about some environmental generated by the uncontrolled expansion of tourism. The construction of resorts has destructed many paddy fields, and also privatized the access to some backwaters, which is no longer acceptable. There is also a problem concerning the solid wastes dumped in public areas. Finally, nothing has been done so far to promote eco tourism.

The working group made of people representing the tourism industry (hotel owners, tour operators, guides) also identified problems that should be overcome to harmonize the situation. They showed good will, and admitted that there are some leakages because they do not enough purchase local products. They explained this behavior by two reasons: there is a quality inconstancy of local products, and local people are not enough aware about how to work and to interact with the tourists. Therefore, they proposed that the government should organize workshops to educate the population about tourism issues and behaviors. Then, they also wrote down that it is impossible for them to be environmentally sustainable. First infrastructures for waste disposal are missing, as infrastructures for water recycle. They also said that they should be given clear guidelines and recommendations for good environmental practices.

The third working group was made of people representing the Kerala Department of Tourism. They found out that the potential of providing locally produced materials to the industry has not been studied enough, and that there is an insufficiency concerning the quality of services and products delivered to the tourists. Besides, the people from the Department of Tourism also said that something should be done for people who have been displaced by tourism infrastructures and also for people who lost their job. Finally, as said previously by the tourism industry working group, they stated that there is a lack of awareness and education on tourism among the local people.

After having freely discussed the issues that the state of Kerala is facing, it was possible to establish a list of objectives to achieve, in order to overcome those issues. Considering the alleviation of poverty, the improvement of living standards, and the better access to opportunities for poor people through tourism activities, here is what the RT Initiative identified as objectives to reach:

- Ensuring an efficient and fair distribution of financial profits
- Multi stakeholder engagement and co-operation
- Human resources development and capacity building
- Fight over-dependency on tourism in some places
- Pay attention to leakage, especially for top end hotels.
- More involvement of Panchayats (local municipal authorities), improve cooperation between authorities and the industry.
- Ensuring transparency and accountability in the RT initiative.
- Before implementing any tourism project, No Objection Certificate (NOC) should be delivered by Panchayat, forest department and state pollution control board.

Here follows how the Department of Tourism communicated about the Responsible Tourism Initiative official objectives. It happened through the RT newsletter, published for the first time in January 2009.

Table 3.2.4: Responsible Tourism official objectives published

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENSURE economic linkages between tourism businesses and local community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENABLE incomes and improve living standards of the poor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENABLE a dignified and equity based relationship between stakeholders.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVIDE an environment to the visitor to contribute to the local economy.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PROVIDE an alternative model to charity-based contributions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENABLE the visitor a real life understanding of the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENSURE businesses adopt highest environmental standards in their practices

Source: Responsible Tourism Initiative News letter 1. Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala (January 2009)

Dr. Vijayakumar, the principal of Kerala Institute of Tourism and Travel Studies argues that the state of Kerala has to try its best to have a holistic approach of development. Different sectors such as tourism, agriculture, economy, or education should work in collaboration to achieve inclusive development objectives and to reduce poverty. Dr. Venu the prime secretary of Kerala Tourism Department, and the one who gave birth to the RT initiative also points out an important idea, the responsible tourism initiatives should not stick to one specific government; if one day he quits his position as a Secretary of the Department of Tourism, the policy has to be maintained, that is the reason why the project is held by the stakeholders, in that sense

this is a decentralized and participatory process. In order to be really effective, PPT has to be on the long run. It is a new philosophy that all the stakeholders should understand.

3.3 Side Initiatives in line with Responsible Tourism Policies

The following projects, the Decentralization program and Kudumbashree as the State Poverty Eradication Mission, were not first designed to be integrated with any tourism policies. But after the birth of the RT initiative, the Department of Tourism realized that the Kerala Decentralization program that was started a couple of years before could serve the RT objectives; and using the already existing strong network of Kudumbashree would also be an important asset for the policies implementation.

3.3.1 Decentralization Program

Even though tourism was not a primary concern of the wide decentralization program when it was launched in Kerala ten years ago, it quickly became obvious that this could be a great tool to make tourism pro-poor oriented in the state, and to change the industry's structure.

To make this decentralization program happen, the state of Kerala implemented a successful participatory local level structure: "People's planning campaign". The problems, issues or ideas are discussed at the Sabha (ward) level, which is the smallest electoral unit, and then the Panchayat (local self government) has to transform the people's ideas and concerns into structured projects that will be finally submitted to the district planning committee for approval. In order to really give the local level to express itself, the central government of Kerala transfers 50% of its total planning allocation to the local governments.

Decentralization objectives within a tourism perspective:

- To improve efficiency of investments by allocating resources to priorities fixed by the local people: it can range from improving basic infrastructures,

to raise wages, to make easier private investments and initiatives, or natural and cultural conservation management.

- To facilitate the creation of local solutions to local problems. People knowing the reality of the field can improve planning and implementation, know how use of traditional knowledge, appropriate technology and people.
- To enable people's participation in the decision making process of tourism development projects.
- To make easier the understanding and cooperation between private and public sectors.
- De-bureaucratization
- To improve transparency, information and public campaigns.

3.3.2 Kudumbashree

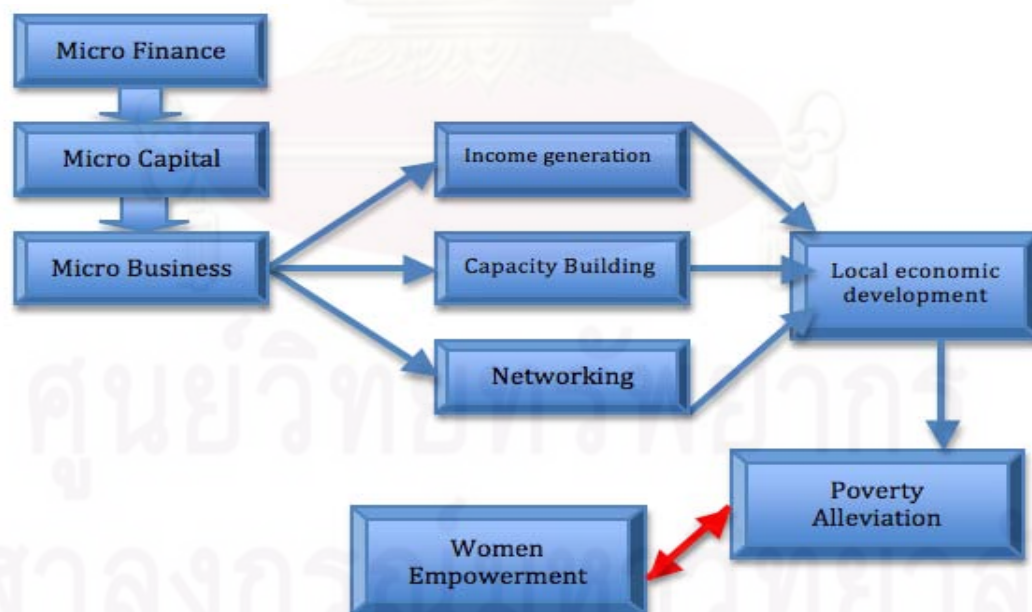
The State Government of Kerala started Kudumbashree in April 1999. It is an innovative poverty eradication program, which is participatory, community based, and women oriented that aims to fight poverty and promote gender equality. This mission was designed and started under the idea of Sarada Muraleedharan, who is still the executive director of Kudumbashree, and who is also married to the secretary of Department of Tourism, the initiator of the Responsible Tourism policies, Dr. Venu. In its ten years of existence, Kudumbashree has grown into a movement gathering nearly 200,000 groups of women, who have been federated into district level. Nowadays 3.6 million women are active members of Kudumbashree, making the network a great-organized pro-poor community in each of the destinations chosen for the responsible tourism program. Kudumbashree's approach for achieving poverty reduction and gender equality goals is to reach out the society through the families and to reach out the families through the women. Then it creates a platform for the women, especially those who are struggling and who belong to the below poverty line (BPL) families to organize themselves and through discussions and meetings and to come up with creative ideas.

Becoming aware of the RT initiative potential for unlocking opportunities to women to access the markets, Kudumbashree decided to join the Responsible

Tourism program of Kerala, understanding that both programs were after all pursuing similar goals. In Kumarakom, the increasing popular backwater destination, the DLRTC asked Kudumbashree to organize cooperatives of farmers to supply food at regular quantity, quality and prices for hotels that accepted to sign up in the project. (This case study will be developed in depth later). The local government has acted to make the link between the two stakeholders – Kudumbashree and the hotels owners- and has been effective in coordinating this successful initiative.

The structure encourages women to start running businesses through micro credit and micro enterprise. The idea is pretty simple, any woman between 15 and 40 can apply and a weekly contribution of a little amount of money is required. Then, small businesses can be developed and financed by loans. Projects range from laundry for backpackers to handicrafts shops, food stalls, restaurant or even home stays. Kudumbashree has not only been successful for generating additional income but as well for training, capacity building and therefore women empowerment.

Table 3.3.2 Kudumbashree scheme:



3.4 Kumarakom Case Study

Figure 3.4.1: Geographic situation of Kumarakom (map retrieved from www.keralife.com)

Kumarakom Location



Now, I would like to present a concrete case study of what has been done so far regarding the Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kerala. There have been four places identified by the Department of Tourism to be pilot project for the implementation of such policies. Everybody agrees to say that the case of Kumarakom is the best and most advanced one. So, after giving an overview of the village background and features, we will see what were the

tourism situation and issues in Kumarakom before that was started the RT experiment. Then, after having described the different measures that have been implemented, we will see a couple of specific cases of people who have been involved directly with the RT initiative. I also would like to notify that during my stay there, I mainly focused on the economic and social aspects of these policies; I only give an overview and quick references of the environmental issues.

3.4.1 General Information about Kumarakom

Kumarakom, a traditional fisherman village of 25,000 inhabitants (this is considered as a small village in India), is situated on the banks of the Vembanad Kayal (lake), 16 Km west of Kottayam, the District main town. Agriculture, fishing and now tourism are the main activities in Kumarakom. If the majority of people are Hindu, there is a quite large Christian community, and a smaller Muslim community as well.

It is a fantastic beautiful pristine landscape of canals and lakes network adorned with white lilies, mangrove forests, emerald green paddy fields, coconut groves, with a peaceful atmosphere and friendly population. Backwater cruises in Kumarakom gives great memories to everybody. Kumarakom has a bird sanctuary home to 91 species of local birds and 50 species of migratory birds. Even if it became a tourist attraction, some families still live in the traditional Kerala houseboats, which is absolutely scenic. Every September since ages, on the main lake, is held a traditional race with snake boats, which is famous all around India. A very strong communist local government is in power (elected) for more than twenty years. Sri. GC Damodaran is the president of Kumarakom Panchayat. The worldwide famous book “The God of Small Things” written by Arundhati Roy, takes place in Aymanam, which is a part of Kumarakom.

Figure 3.4.2 Kumarakom Landscape (Author’s picture)



Figure 3.4.3 Traditional Kerala House Boat (Author's picture)



3.4.2 Kumarakom tourism situation before the RT Initiative

Whereas Kumarakom was developing as a well-deserved popular destination, the arrival of tourism industry was initially considered as good news by the local people, but it quickly appeared that a gap between the tourism industry and the local population was emerging.

Even if the conversion of land from farming to tourism infrastructures reduced the agricultural crops, the local workers were happy because they were able to increase their wages through construction jobs. But this situation lasted for a short time. Mr. Saroop Roy, the state coordinator for Equations (a research, campaigning, advocacy and lobbying organization dealing with the democratization of tourism by promoting the principles of equity, social justice and sustainability) explained me the results of the study that Equations conducted in 2002 in Kumarakom. (*Sustainable tourism management Plan for Kumarakom Panchayat*, EQUATIONS). He stated that people shouldn't think that they could live only from tourism activities, but rather consider it as a potential additional source of income. When people think tourism as

an attractive and an easy source of money, problems happen. It has been the case in Kumarakom, tourism was considered by farmers as a more valuable and a less hard-working activity. The demand for construction of hotels and resorts increased the land value. Villagers, some of them attracted by the opportunity to make money sold their land, or others that could not afford anymore to rent lands, had no choice but to end their traditional farming activities and became unemployed. But most of them finally get back in troubles, they lost their land and didn't know how to manage and operate tourism activities.

During the time when the study was conducted, it was clear that the people from Kumarakom were not benefitting from the new tourism businesses in the area. Even though the creation of hotels and restaurants opened many job opportunities, the majority of tourism business operators were not giving jobs to the local people. In Kerala, because the education is among one of the best in India, and because of the communist government, the cost of labour is high. So, 80% of the hotels' staff and workers were recruited from outside Kumarakom; an important share of them was from Northeast India, the poorest part of the country. It has also been reported that the working conditions in the tourism sector were very low: workers were not provided job security, many cases of broken contracts without any reason happened, and labourers were paid at lower rates than the minimum legal salary.

Besides these serious economic issues, people from Kumarakom suffered from the tourism industry in many different ways. Villagers' lifestyles and occupations are closely related to the backwaters, people have been always using it for fishing, collecting shells, or to move around the area. But many resorts owners closed the access to lakes and canals to the local people to satisfy the tourists' needs of tranquillity. They also changed the landscape; mangroves have been destroyed and replaced by granite walls in order to have a wider sightseeing from the rooms, and to make easier the birds observation for the guests. The diminution of the mangroves destroyed the possibility for fishes to find food. The fish species that were abundant in the water reduced and this is clearly threatening for the livelihood of fishermen dependent on this activity. The bird census conducted in the area shown the impact of the mangrove destruction on the birds. There were 36,498 birds in 1993, 22,195 birds

in 2001 and 13,274 birds in 2002. There is also a problem with the increasing number of motorboats to operate cruises in the backwaters that considerably damaged the fishermen fishing nets.

The same survey conducted by Equations in 2002 among 140 households in the village shows that the tourism expansion has not contributed to a better situation regarding the infrastructure development or to improve peoples' living standards. When the people were asked about their opinion if "*the tourism development in Kumarakom contributed to improve the following?*". 62 answered that tourism had no contribution in improving roads or transportation system, 87 answered „NO“ to the supply and quality of water, 90 answered „NO“ regarding the electricity, and 99 responded „NO“ to the availability of employment.

So it looks pretty obvious why the anger and disappointment toward the tourism industry and authorities was increasing among the local population in Kumarakom. That was the situation of Kumarakom before starting the Responsible Tourism initiative.

3.4.3 Implementation of the RT initiative in Kumarakom

Although the Department of Tourism declared the place as a pilot destination for Responsible Tourism in 2007, to actually start the RT initiative in Kumarakom was not an easy job. Because of the reasons enounced before, the local population was very reluctant to new policies and to tourism in general. Some activists started to raise their voice against the program. They were arguing that this project would only make things worse. Their main concerns focused on the fear that this program will drag more and more tourists in Kumarakom, and bring drugs consumption or prostitution; people were also afraid that this would be a foreign funding program and the village would not benefit from it. Many protests and campaigns against the RT program were organized in Kumarakom. In order to show good will and to behave on a transparent way as much as possible, the Kumarakom Panchayat took a positive step to clarify the situation. In May 2007, was settled a mass gathering in the Attamangalam church where several thousands of people attended. It was an open forum where the villagers were free to share their ideas, anxieties and arguments. The Panchayat representatives

and some officials from the Kerala Department of Tourism took this opportunity to explain about the schedule, protagonists, means, aims and objectives of the RT initiative.

After this meeting, it was actually possible to start the RT implementation. The first objective was focused on the revival of the agricultural sector in Kumarakom. The Department of Tourism asked some help from Kudumbashree, Panchayat and from the Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies (KITTS) to conduct a survey and analysis concerning the possibility to link the local population with the tourism businesses and market. Dr. Vijayakumar, the principal from KITTS shared with me his knowledge about how this process evolved. At the end of 2007, under the demand of the Department of Tourism, KITTS realized a research to identify the production capacity of Kumarakom farmers, and the hotels and restaurants needs for fruits and vegetables. First, they identified the group of people who was the most in struggles. They listed the families of farmers living below the poverty line; these local producers are facing difficulties to access the market to sell their production. Besides, KITTS researchers did a survey from the hotels and restaurants to know exactly their needs of fruits or vegetables. Then it became possible for the local self-government to establish the link between the local farmers and the hotels, the DLRTC cell prepared an agricultural calendar for the supply of products to the hotels: what should be cultivated at what time, and what amount is needed. 18 hotels and resorts accepted to sign up an agreement to buy their vegetables, fruits, or fishes exclusively to local producers.

But if this nowadays groups of farmers and tourism business owners are working in a good cooperation, this has not always been the case. At the beginning of 2008, Mr. Rupesh, the destination level coordinator of RT in Kumarakom, faced numerous issues. In February, all the crops were ready to harvest. But the hotels and resorts finally changed their promises and disagreed to buy the local products. Most of them argued that Kumarakom items were too expensive; it was really much more profitable for them to buy wholesale products from Tamil Nadu (Kerala's neighboring state). The local producers had finally to go to the Kottayam market to sell their production. At this stage, the RT initiative was in crisis in Kumarakom. Mr. Rupesh

and the Panchayat informed the Kerala Department of Tourism on this situation. Dr. Venu, the prime secretary, and the creator of the Responsible Tourism came himself in Kumarakom and called for a meeting with tourism business owners. He firmly requested them to co operate in the initiative. Two weeks later, 15 hotels, and among them the luxury Taj Resort and 5 star Lake Resort, made a written and formal agreement with the DLRTC and the Panchayat. They agreed to purchase products to the local farmers. On 14th March 2008, Mr. Kodyeri Balakrishnan himself, the State Minister of Tourism, came to officially celebrate the launch of the Responsible Tourism Initiative in Kumarakom. A first set of 11 products was sold to the hotels and resorts on the 18th March of 2008.

In order to respond the Hotel industry worries about the price, quality and consistency of the supply; DLRTC formed a pricing committee and a quality committee. The Price Committee is made of the Panchayat, some DLRTC representatives, all hotels and resorts delegates and Kudumbashree members. The committee meets once a month to fix the price of all the products for the upcoming month. The Quality Assurance Committee is made of the same stakeholders, but a health inspector, a veterinary surgeon and a Kerala University of Agriculture member.

After one year of efforts from the DLRTC, the RT initiative has real and quantifiable results.

- Local agricultural production strongly increased
- Cultivation calendar
- Creation of system for steady prices to avoid inflation
- Creation of 10 Karshakasamity (farmer group), including 460 people
- Creation of 20 Kudumbashree units, including 250 women
- Creation of 5 Micro Enterprises focused on women
 - 1 women fish processing unit
 - 1 women chicken processing unit
 - 1 women Chappathy (local bread) processing unit
 - 2 coconut supply unit

This project is a success, the hotels now receive quickly what they need to run their restaurant, and the poor farmers know precisely what to produce and to whom they will sell their production. Mr. Prasanth, who is the State Level Coordinator for the RT initiative, explained that on his experience, in the majority of the cases, what people are looking for is the sustainability. They are always happy to have an additional income but after all what they really want is the consistency regarding their income. That is the reason why this partnership is a success. Farmers know that they can produce the same amount all the year around. The RT initiative in Kumarakom reached 1,350 direct beneficiaries through this agricultural project. And now tensions or clashed between the local farmers and the hotel industry became rare.

So, one year after the beginning of the RT in Kumarakom, Mr. Rupesh and his team gained confidence and decided to go beyond the successful agricultural project. They developed new projects to enable local people to access the tourism market and to benefit from it. The cooperation between the local people and the tourism industry is still increasing on many ways. Recently, the DLRTC team organized the link between a couple of hotels and some local artists. Hotels agreed to buy products, services or performances from two handicraft units, one woman cultural group performing Thiruvathirakaly and Kolkaly (traditional Kerala dance art, figure 3.4.4), and one women painting group. Besides providing additional income for the art performers, this project also enables the promotion and conservation of the traditional art forms from Kerala, and avoids the usual cultural breakdown that happens when tourism is developing in a destination.

The most recently developed project is named the “Village Life Experience @ Kumarakom”. Mr. Rupesh personally designed this packaged tour project that has been launched in July 2009. The tourists are taken to see how the real life of the villagers is. People can enjoy a visit of a fish farm; vegetables and fruits farm, duck farm, paddy fields, and can also learn a bit about the Keralan traditional fishing techniques. The cost for a half-day trip is about 1,000 rupees, and the amount of the money earned is equally divided to each villager who participated to the tour.

Figure 3.4.4: Performance of the traditional dance, Thiruvathirakaly (picture retrieved from: http://www.flickr.com/photos/kris_kumar/2862639448/)



As reported above, we can see that the DLRTC is giving a very special role to women in the Responsible Tourism initiatives and projects. Women played a crucial part in the implementation. Through the constant work of Kudumbashree to organize and monitor women's work, now 760 women are included in the cultivation program, 35 in retail activities, 30 in art and cultural groups, and 45 in the village tour group. This was an important step toward women empowerment in Kumarakom; these groups of women now became the decision makers of the program. The economic benefits gained from these activities really make a difference both on economic and social aspects. In such a way, a carefully managed tourism industry can help the rural poor women to become empowered, their status in their families and in the society changed through this program.

3.4.4 Examples of people impacted by the RT initiative.

Now, I would like to show concrete examples of the impacts on peoples' lives that had the Responsible Tourism initiative in Kumarakom.

While I was staying there, Mr. Rupesh worked with me closely as translator and took me to visit different projects that have been implemented by the RT office. This provided a good opportunity to interact with the local people; and to conduct interviews to know their perceptions and opinions on the RT initiative.

A. Organic farming activities:

On the first day, during the morning I went to visit Mr. Mohan's farm. He has been one of the very first farmers to be linked with the RT project. He is now the manager of a Karshakasamithy (farmer groups). His farm is also included in the Village Life Experience tour. Mohan took me around his farm to have a look at the different produced items. He is the proud producer of 100% organic fruits and vegetables species. He is also farming fishes and ducks. For Mohan, being part of the RT initiative dramatically changed his life. Before being linked to the hotels to sell fruits, vegetables or fish, he was hardly surviving; he had no income and was only producing just enough food for his family. Now, he is selling for 2,600 rupees a day of items. Besides this, he also earns 250 rupees when a tour comes to visit his farm, and when the tourists stop for having the absolutely delicious lunch prepared by his wife, he earns 150 rupees per guest. He has been able to buy some additional land. This man witnessed to have been really economically and socially empowered. Economically empowered because his income literally skyrocketed; now he is able to sustain his well being all the year around. Socially empowered for several reasons; he has become the leader of a Karshakasamithy and is highly respected and recognized by the other farmers in the area. He becomes a man of decision and is also attending to meetings in the local self-government. He also now feels proud of his activity and is truly happy to show his successful work and lifestyle to international tourists.

B. Local business:

Then, I was able to visit Samrudhi RT shop. Ms. Samrudhi is running this fruit and vegetable shop that provides food for the partner hotels. She has been informed of the possibility to open this business because she is part of a Kudumbashree group. This shop was opened with the help of a local government loan, now they pay back the credit by 200 rupees a day. The hotels place their orders, and then they are

delivered the food that is produced by the local farmers. When there is some excess in the production, it is sold on the market. Ms. Samrudhi let me know that the RT initiative had really a strong and positive impact on her life. Before, she had no consistent income and now she can proudly face economic difficulties. Her husband used to have alcohol related problems due to the hard living conditions of the family. She did not have enough money to provide decent education to her kids, and she was in a very uncomfortable social situation because she used to be in debt to many people in town. Now, all these problems are on the way to be resolved, and since she gets responsibilities, she also feels socially empowered within her family, but as well in the wider community

C. Handicraft business:

I also went to visit a handicraft workshop run by a 50 years old artist. In 2008, besides building a partnership with Lake Resort (a luxury hotel that received numerous awards) for purchasing fruits and vegetables, the RT office also initiated a bridge between the resort and a local artist making souvenirs and handicrafts. This story is actually the one that the RT is the most proud of. Prior to this opportunity, this man and his family were living in terrible conditions and extreme poverty. He was unemployed for ages, he had strong alcoholism problems, and almost no income for the family, no land, and the kids were unable to pursue their studies after high school. The family's critical case was reported by the neighborhood to Mr. Rupesh. He came to visit this man to try to unlock some opportunities to him to get access to the tourism market. After discussions he found out that that this man had wonderful artistic skills to design and to make wood items. Then, Mr. Rupesh went to see resorts, and finally concluded a deal with Lake Resort. The man would have to produce souvenirs and handicrafts for the hotel such as wood sculptures for example, but his star item is the traditional Kerala houseboat replica. The luxury hotel now uses it for decoration and sometimes offers it as gifts to its customers. This partnership provided this man a sustainable income of 15,000 rupees a month, which much more than the average income for rural people, and even up to 25,000 some busy months. He has been able to give back dignity to his family, he stopped drinking, and his son got a loan to start college studies in computer science in Bangalore. The

man declared that without this opportunity he would have probably already committed suicide. The cherry on the cake for this story is that the government of India has been really touched by this case, and in order to encourage other successful partnerships like this one, awarded the family a loan with very low interest to build a better house and a better workshop. This man is planning to hire an apprentice very soon, he will teach him his skills, and so will be able to increase his production and keep walking on the way of prosperity.



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CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

In February 2007, the first step considering the Responsible Tourism Initiative was taken by the Kerala Department of Tourism. Of course it took time to implement all the RT structure, at the state level and at the destination level as well. But the pilot projects already impacted people and their livelihoods. In 2002, Miss Caroline Ashley, one of the prominent writer on the PPT issue, from the Overseas Development Institute in London (ODI) developed a framework for PPT case study (Ashley, 2002). The United Nations World Tourism Organizations (UNWTO) also listed some practices that should be followed by the different stakeholders to make tourism pro-poor. Whereas I will also follow my own feelings and ideas, I intend to stay close to these analytical frameworks. It is important to keep in mind that since PPT practices or initiatives are quite new, the framework on PPT strategies is designed to assess what has already being done to develop tourism with a pro-poor perspective, to identify good ideas and initiatives and to assess preliminary impacts. Even if Kerala is a pioneer in this domain it is still very early to draw definitive conclusions.

In this section dealing with the analysis of Kerala tourism policies, and with the evaluation of these policies" impacts on the local people, my objective is to answer my initial research questions.

- What is actually pro-poor in Kerala Tourism Policies?
- What are the concrete impacts on the poor people?
- Is Kerala a so specific case, or is it possible to replicate it somewhere else?

Then I will look at some problems, issues or challenges concerning PPT in Kerala that have been identified by different activists or observers.

This framework is designed from "Methodology for Pro-Poor Tourism Case study" written by Ashley (2002), and "Pro-poor Tourism: Putting Poverty at the Heart of the Tourism Agenda", written by Caroline Ashley, Charlotte Boyd and Harold

Goodwin (2000). Based on its experience, UNWTO has also identified some mechanisms to reduce poverty levels through tourism. The following checklist is a cross results from these three models.

4.1 Put poverty issues on the tourism agenda

PPT can be stated as an additional objective, but this requires pro-active intervention and a well-designed strategy. There will possible be choices to make, for example between a fast tourism industry growth through foreign investment, and slower growth relying on training and local capacity. And those trade-offs need to be recognized and wisely accepted by the tourism authorities.

- *Are pro-poor objectives explicit or implicit in the initiative?*

- On this issue Mr. Prasanth, the RT state level coordinator, explained me that the fact that making tourism Responsible has been declared has a policy, is something unique in India, in other states tourism is just recognized as an industry. In Kerala's case, poverty is clearly an objective put on the tourism agenda. For example, when the Department of Tourism, on behalf of the RT Initiative, asked KITTS and Equations to realize a study to identify the most struggling groups, who have no means to access the tourists market, and the families living below the poverty line, the pro-poor objectives are clearly stated.

- *Incorporate PPT into Mainstream Tourism*

- Kerala acknowledged that the responsible tourism policies shouldn't be a new niche market but the principles should be applied to any business at any level in the industry.

4.2 Actions to overcome problems

- a. *Education to raise peoples' awareness on the PPT issues and challenges. Education and training targeted at the poor, (particularly women) to enhance peoples' consciousness of tourism related opportunities.*

- From my interview with Dr. Vijayakumar, the KITTS principal, I noticed that the institute takes the aspect of responsibility of tourism activities very seriously. Besides teaching traditional tourism management or hospitality, KITTS is integrating in every program a pro-poor focus. They are working in a close collaboration with the Department of Tourism in order to coordinate the state's policies and objectives with what is taught to the next generations of tourism businesses operators or the next policy makers. KITTS receives a strong back up from the government to emphasize on the responsible and pro-poor aspect that can be found in tourism activities. This is a very important point, and is clearly part of the wider communication strategy of the state's explicit pro-poor policies.
- According to Mr. Vijayakumar, the department of tourism pays attention to have a good transparency and accountability about its projects, and making the KITTS students aware of it in details is another very good point. He also shared with me his feeling that there is a growing trend among the students; every year, they are becoming more and more aware of the social and economic impacts of Tourism over the local population. The fact that the students are now more and more interested in the sustainable or responsible aspects tourism gives him hope and confidence for the future. Within the frame of its participation in Destination Level Responsible Tourism Committee (DLRTC), KITTS also offer training programs about Responsible tourism development, following the three aspects: economic (financial opportunities), social (capacity building, education, and networking), and environment (waste management, recycling, and water conservation). Those free seminars are organized in the four pilot destinations selected, with the collaboration of the Department of Tourism.
- Mr. Saroop Roy agreed with the Dr. Vijayakumar, the principal of the Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism studies. They are both quite confident in the next generation of tourism workers. In collaboration with the institute, Equations organize a practical workshop with the KITTS students. They had to spend a couple of days in one of the 4 DLRTC, and their mission was to find out what are, up to their observations, the

problems generated by tourism. The results were satisfying, showing that the next generation of tourism managers is probably sensible about these issues.

b. Employment of the poor in tourism enterprises.

- Companies that are locally owned operate 80% of the rooms, and now the overwhelming majority of the hotel staff is from Kumarakom region. Now, a part from the peak season in November and December when more work force is needed, the DLRTC request the hotels and resorts to hire people from the localities.
- Mr. Rupesh himself from DLRTC already developed new tourism products that help to include the poor in the tourism market. This is the example of the „Village Life Experience @ Kumarakom“. In this tour package, the strategies that enable poverty reduction are clearly explained. The DLRTC wants the visitor to understand how this activity can bring benefit to the local poor people.

c. Supply of goods and services to tourism enterprises by the poor or by enterprises employing the poor.

- During the launch of DLRTC in Kumarakom, making the hotels and restaurants buying local goods (food, handicrafts, etc.) and services (transport, guides, etc.), was actually the very first priority of the project. The Kumarakom case study studied previously is a very relevant example. In Kumarakom 15 hotels, and among them the most luxury resorts, signed up contracts to buy their food to the local farmers. Besides, another agreement has been made: for any construction project, raw materials have to be provided by the local producers.

d. Direct sales of goods and services to visitors by the poor (informal economy).

- The creation of coconut stalls alongside Kumarakom main road was a project fully designed and financed by the Responsible Tourism initiative.

e. *Establishment and running of tourism businesses by the poor: micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSME). It is crucial to provide assistance to micro finance.*

- Five micro enterprises of food processing, and one shop are fully running by disadvantaged group of women. Those projects have been financed through micro credit delivered by the RT initiative. Dr. Venu clearly explains that the goal of this initiative is not just distributing money to the poor people by taking it from the benefits generated by tourism. Pro-poor tourism is not charity. The bottom philosophy of Responsible Tourism is equal relationship; giving the poor people's the tool to make additional income by tourism activities. The role of the Department of Tourism is to unlock the opportunities.

f. *Work through partnerships, including the tourism industry. What efforts are made to involve other stakeholders?*

- National and local governments, private enterprises, industry associations, NGOs, community organizations, consumers, and donors all have a role to play.
- The previously explained example of the partnership between hotels and farmers, is actually a great example of collaboration between the Department of Tourism, the local governments, Kudumbashree, farmers, state agricultural authorities, health and veterinary bodies, tourism business operators, Education body through KITTS, and NGOs and activists with Kabani, Equations and ICRT.
- A great innovation has been made to slow down the development of unsustainable tourism activities: NOC (no-objection certificate) has to be delivered by Panchayat, forest department and state pollution control.

g. *The creation of infrastructure for tourism industry should benefit the wider community.*

- DLRTC works for that when implementing a tourism project, access to the basic amenities (water, electricity, roads) for local community has to be ensured. Within this objective, the hotel owners and the government financed a retreatment of used water facility; but the local community can benefit from it as well. The privatization of lakes and canals that some resorts did a couple of years ago is on the way to be resolved. It will be possible by the beginning of 2010 for the villagers to have back what they owned for centuries.

h. *No standardized approaches, tourism authorities should take in account the differences and cases should be treated differently upon the circumstances.*

- Acknowledgement that different kind of places (beach, rural, backwater or urban) should be considered differently with their particular issues and objectives (different approach from mainstream mass tourism). The government pays attention to develop a kind of tourism that is appropriate to the traditional Kerala society values (respect to the environment, responsible, slow paced, smart, Ayurveda.)

Table 4.1: Overview of Kerala's Responsible and Pro-poor measures.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Barrier</u>	<u>Asset</u>	<u>Action / initiative to overcome it</u>
Lack of skills	X		The Kerala Institute of Travel and Tourism Studies is teaching PPT. Trainings at local level through different organizations.
Lack of financial power	X		Creation of Micro-credit projects, and cooperation with Kudumbashree.

Gender Issue	X		Working groups of women through Kudumbashree are strong. Many projects are women-focused in Kumarakom RT.
Location		X	Kumarakom is blessed with truly wonderful landscapes, plenty of tourist attractions sites and interesting cultural heritage
Access to tourism market	X		Try to avoid leakages, give priority to local people. Incentives for hotels to employ local people.
Cooperation and public/private partnerships	X		Government worked to make understand the hotels they should cooperate with the local population
Tourism segment and market		X	Kumarakom is a destination that attracts both domestic and overseas tourists
Participant and decision making involvement	X		Creation of the NOC, the Non-Objection Certificate. To make sure that local people are consulted prior to any decision concerning tourism development project.

Framework extracted from: Ashley (2002)

4.3 Problems and Issues still Ongoing

Thinking that it could be interesting and relevant to hear different point of views about Kerala's tourism policies, I made an appointment with Mr. Sumesh Mangalassary, who is the head of Kabani Tours, and has been working with the tourism issues for more than 10 years. This organization is doing independent researches and is as well making up tours by strictly sticking to pro-poor tourism principles. His opinion about the Kerala tourism policies is different from what we can hear usually. He says that what are stated in the policies are just words, and that the reality on the ground is different. He argues through examples that different things

are going wrong, and illustrates how the state tourism development is not controlled enough.

- In Allapuzah, the most “developed” backwater destination, the tourism development has been so uncontrolled during the last decade that it is now a very unsustainable situation, as well environmentally and socially. All the houseboats hotels are strongly polluting the rivers, and the fishermen do not have enough space anymore to work.
- Then, he argued that there is an unfair competition and regulation differences between the 3 or 4 stars luxury hotels and the small or medium family owned businesses. Concerning the electricity rates, the independent home-stays have to pay the domestic taxes and rates, whereas large hotels are benefiting of subsidies and discounts. And what happens with the license for liquors is similar. Small hotels owners have to pay 2.5 million Rupees to be allowed to sell alcohol drinks to their customer; meanwhile the luxury hotels are free to open bars without paying any license. And this situation stands all over Kerala.
- In the famous beach destination of Kovalam, at the extreme south of the state, although declared as a RT pilot destination, there is a project in preparation that might also be very unsustainable. An artificial reef is planned to be constructed in front of the main tourist beach, in order to protect it. This money comes from the subsidies that the state had received after the Tsunami, which is a very questionable way to use the allocated money. Then, it has been shown by some scientists that the stream of the ocean will divert to the extremities of the beach, where are settled fisherman villages. At least 500 families will have to be displaced if this reef is constructed. When we think that Kovalam has been declared as one of the four DLRTC, we can be skeptical about those projects.

Figure 4.3: Kovalam, one of India's most famous beach resorts (author's picture)



He also highlighted the fact that trade unions in tourism are lacking in Kerala. There is also a lack of laws to protect the workers. Some hotels hire people from North East India, the poorest part of the country and it has been reported some cases of under payment and over exploitation; they have no structured contracts and people working for 3 years as a trainee is a reality.

So, his opinion is that the development approach of Kerala concerning tourism is still too much managed under a top-down style. Local participation has to be increased and communities should be systematically included in the decision making process and the planning of tourism projects.

Mr. Saroop Roy from Equations most of the time agrees with what is decided as projects by the Development of Tourism. But he also agrees with Mr. Sumesh about the decision-making. According to him, the main problems to make these Responsible Tourism project come true happen during the implementation process. It is not enough democratic or grass-root and still too much top down on certain aspects. Equations by reporting dysfunctions and by lobbying are trying to break this unfair existing system of decision-making.

Last, we could say that the final decision is made by the tourists themselves, who have to behave responsibly. The problem is actually that most of them are not aware about this kind of possibilities in the tourism policies. During the research, I had been able to interview 5 different tourists: 2 Japanese girls met in Varkala, 2 German men met in Kumarakom, and 1 French boy met in a bus between Kumarakom and Kochi. After asking them if they knew that the Department of Tourism in Kerala was implementing measures to make the tourism industry more pro-poor, all of them said that they had no idea about that. Then, they also witnessed that their understanding about what is actually pro-poor tourism is very vague. Only one of them has been able to find an example of what the Government could do to make tourism benefit to the poor. But on the other hand, all of them said that if they were aware about it, they would prefer to pick up a destination where they could be sure that the money generated by the tourism benefits the poor in priority.

This could be analyzed by saying that there is a big lack of communication around the pro-poor tourism concept. In order to be really effective and to spread in any tourism destinations, pro-poor tourism has to be economically viable. So, that is the reason why it may be important to work on making PPT more popular among the people visiting Kerala.

4.4 Possibility to replicate Kerala's pilot project somewhere else

Dr. Venu, the secretary of the Kerala Department of Tourism acknowledges that Kerala was benefiting from particularly favorable initial conditions. Besides the natural beauty of "God's Own Country" and its plenty of cultural attraction, the state of Kerala has some political and social structures that were important assets to implement PPT.

- Kudumbashree, the women oriented poverty reduction organization, was really strength for the implementation of the Responsible Tourism initiative. It played a role of active partner by providing groups of organized women who were ready to work within the RT frame. Kudumbashree benefits from a strong reputation among people from Kerala, this partnership gave important credibility to the Responsible

Tourism initiative, which was then able to use Kudumbashree network. The Kudumbashree project fits exactly with Kerala's approach to development, and is perfectly integrated into the state's strategy.

- Kerala decided to make tourism an engine for poverty alleviation since a couple of decades already, previously to many International organizations (UN, WTO...). So, Kerala appears to be a pioneer in its way to drive and to understand tourism development. This might be related to the fact that the state has always been very left-wing, or even communist: this of course, had a huge influence over Kerala development strategy, the roots of Kerala's vision of fair and pro poor tourism policies can be found in communist principles.
- The state's small size can be considered as a natural asset as well. It obviously makes easier the decentralization and the implementation of policies.
- Kerala has the better education system in India; the population is the more literate. People are well educated so we can assume that they have stronger communication skills than elsewhere in India, this makes a comparative advantage to other states.
- Kerala is not too much reliant on the overseas tourists, and this is an important factor. Usually, a critique made toward tourism development is about the too heavy reliance on foreign markets, and thus the vulnerability on external factors (fashion in destinations, global crisis, terrorism, environmental threat...). So, local people working in small tourist businesses become entirely dependent on these external factors. But for the case of Kerala, this usually justified critique might be no longer true. Even if every year the number of international tourist arrivals is increasing, Kerala's tourism industry is far more reliant on domestic Indian tourism. And the government is aware of the growing emergence of the Indian middle class that represents hundreds of millions of people. It has been shown (Jackson (2006). „*Developing Regional Tourism in China: The Potential for Activity in Business Cluster in a Socialist Market Economy*”; *Tourism Management*, 27) that people from developing countries, when they

become able to spare enough money to travel, usually start to travel in their own country. And looking at India's amazing diversity on natural and cultural attractive sites, this is easy to understand. A similar phenomenon has been observed in China, where domestic tourism has really the lead. This said, Kerala's predominance of domestic tourists, gives the people working in tourism some security.

The objectives were to know if Kerala's tourism were actually pro-poor, in what extent these policies impact the poor people, and if the case of Kerala should be taken as an example or as an exception.

I personally found out that the state of Kerala is really trying to make tourism more Responsible and pro-poor. The government is also careful to drive these new policies slowly. They started to create pilot destinations, and so far Kumarakom shows to be a good experiment. A lot of initiatives and pro-active measures have been implemented and already shown concrete positive impacts on poor people incomes, access to tourism market, networking, improvement of people livelihood and of the community well-being.

On the other hand I am more skeptical about the possibility to replicate this case. I think Kerala's initial conditions were absolutely crucial to make these policies come true. The traditional left-wing orientation of the state, the existence of Tourism Institute such as KITTS and of poverty reduction organization such as Kudumbashree, or the well-educated population are numerous assets that are not available everywhere else. Besides, not so many places have so much tourist attractions as Kerala has. When it is not a commercially realizable project, it is very complicate to organize pro-poor partnerships between the tourism industry and the local people.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The first stage of the RT started from September 2008, until September 2009. Now, it is considered that Kumarakom has moved to the second stage. The committee wants to replicate what has been a success (local partnerships, sustainability of income, new tourism product). So, the Department of Tourism is planning to use the case of Kumarakom as a framework; but of course, all cases are different and projects have to be customized to match with the local features.

Whereas it is often said that tourism industry is unsustainable regarding the negative impacts it may have over culture, environment and economy; in the case of Kerala we are facing a different situation. The Kerala government's pro-poor orientation, alongside with its sustainable development ideology, its numerous attractive tourists sites and its high social and human development; may soon will be a proof and an evidence that when tourism is understood and managed this way, can bring benefits to the people and fight poverty. In that case, we can honestly refer to an economically, socially, responsible and sustainable tourism development.

The central Indian Ministry of Tourism considers what has been done in Kumarakom as very impressive and would like to implement similar policies all over the country. But it is important to keep in mind that the Kerala benefits from very favorable initial conditions that may not be easy to find anywhere else.

As said previously, in order to be really effective, PPT measures have to be economically viable, but the lack of communication over the PPT program in Kerala might be a considerable issue in the long run. If the tourists knew more about it, they may openly ask for it, and the industry and the governments would probably take the issue more seriously. In order to increase the popularity of PPT and of socio-economic dimensions of tourism more generally, it might be relevant to create an international label for tourism businesses and destinations that respect some guidelines.

As it already exists for environmental criteria, (already dozens of “green label” in the tourism industry) it would probably be a good idea to have certification programs for socio-economic sustainability. Based on an audit system from the government or NGOs, the participants would get an accreditation (usually a logo) assuring that their product, or service, or management style is in line with Pro-poor principles.

This is also a way to make sure that no company will use the pro-poor or responsible words as marketing tools. Before being allowed to use those terms, a certification from government should be obtained. The tourism authorities could also organize rankings, as it exists for the comfort and luxury standards.

Creating a certification program for PPT could have many positive outcomes:

- If there are standardized criteria designed by the local Department of Tourism, this could help hotels to know more about PPT guidelines and how to make it come true.
- This could make the PPT concept something more real, and to become more visible to the wider community.
- Good way to measure, control and monitor.
- Another benefit for hotel or shop owners: being part of a bigger organization (the PPT label) could help the family-run businesses to access market, to do economy of scales, share communication marketing and promotion costs, benefit from others’ ideas, improve policies.
- Moreover, it can be used as a communication and marketing tool for attracting tourists who want to be more responsible.
- The subsidies are only given to businesses that respect guidelines.
- That could encourage tourists to raise their awareness about such issues

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APPENDICES

Annex # 1: Interview designed for: Mr. Saroop Roy from Equations; Mr. Sumesh Mangalassary from Kabani; and for the International Center for Responsible Tourism India

- Can you please first tell me about the organization itself, what is its purpose or objectives? In what way is it different or alternative?
- How is it financed? Do you work in collaboration with other partners? State or non state partners? And what about you, can I know how did you get involved into it?
- Within the state of Kerala, what are your most relevant actions and achievements?
- Do you see a positive evolution in Kerala tourism policies? Do you think the state is on the good path to address poverty through tourism activities?
- Do you think that the core issues and problems are addressed? What should be changed or re adjusted? I mean, what did the Kerala tourism department did right or wrong?
- On your personal opinion, what do you think about the potential of tourism to actually reduce poverty, or to empower communities? Until what point is it true?
- According to you or your observations, what are the priorities about the benefits to bring to poor people? Financial or non financial?
- How about the transparency and decision making of Kerala tourism policies? Is it clear?
- What's your opinion on the pilot destinations for responsible tourism experience that has been created by the government, talking about Kumarakom or Kovalam?
- What is your opinion about the decentralization? How to respect the local people priorities or concerns about tourism development and projects?

- Do you think it is possible to raise tourists' awareness about these important issues? Who are the tourists that are more sensible about this issue you think? Domestic or international tourists?



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Annex # 2: Interview conducted with Dr. Venu, the first secretary of Kerala Department of Tourism; Dr. Vijayakumar, the director of KITTS; Mr. Prasanth, the State Level coordinator of the Responsible Tourism Initiative; and to Mr. RupeshKumar, the destination level coordinator in Kumarakom.

I would like to know more, from your point of view, what has been done so far, and what are the pro-poor characteristics of Kerala tourism policies or initiatives. I would like to explore the policies' impacts on one side (micro level), and on the other side about the how are organized the tourism policies (macro level).

- When and how did it start?
- What concrete measures have been taken so far?
- What else is intended to be done?
- How is it organized? The structure of the tourism development in Kerala?
- What are the expected outcomes and the timeline?
- About your personal opinion? What do you think about the potential of tourism to reduce poverty, or to empower some communities? Or what could be the benefits, - financial or non-financial -?
- Can you please tell me more about the projects and the collaboration with other organizations? How do you build a network of different stakeholders related to the tourism industry?
- How the Kerala department of Tourism intends to work and cooperate with the local government, panchayats?
- I heard about the Destination Level Responsible Tourism Committees, in 4 pilot destinations, could you tell me more about it? How things are going there?
- What is your opinion about the decentralization? How to respect the local people priorities or concerns about tourism development and projects?
- What do you think about the possibility to include people from the informal sector?
- What about the communication, the transparency of Kerala's tourism policies?

- So, after a certain time that has been launched the Kerala responsible tourism initiative, what are the achievements, the positive and negative outcomes?
- Do you think that it is possible to raise awareness of the tourists about this important issue? Who are the tourists that are more sensible about this issue you think? Domestic or international tourists?



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Annex # 3: Questionnaire submitted to some tourists chosen randomly

Name:

Country of Origin:

Age:

About the visit:

1. Is this your first visit to India? And to Kerala?
2. What is the purpose of your visit?(Work, holidays, study etc.)
3. For how long will you stay in Kerala? How long have you been here for?
4. Where will you stay during your visit? (only here or other places)
5. How did you get here? (Plane, bus, private car, train?)
6. Which activities are you planning to do during this vacation?

Responsibility

1. Why did you choose to come to Kerala? (please give a couple of reasons)
2. What kind of expectations did you have before you came here?
3. In which way did this place meet your expectations/ didn't meet your expectations?
4. What order would you list your priorities in choosing a hotel:
Comfort, price, reputation for responsibility, sustainability, location, size, service to Client
5. Do you know that the state of Kerala is promoting Responsible Tourism and Pro Poor initiatives, in order to make tourism a more sustainable activity?
6. Do you know that Kumarakom is designed as a special Responsible Tourism area?
7. Did these policies affect your choice of destination?

8. What do you know about Responsible /Pro poor tourism?
9. How did you get information about this issue?
10. What is Responsible tourism for you?
11. What issues are important to you regarding the sustainability of a tourism destination?
12. Can you rank the importance, from 1 to 3, of these factors regarding sustainability:
 - Financial benefits to the local people
 - Social benefits, community empowerment, cultural conservation
 - Environmentally responsible operations such as use of energy, water, proper waste disposal, wildlife conservation...

About the guest:

1. What is your occupation?
2. How many people are you traveling with?
3. How many years have you studied?
4. Are you a member of any environmental or social support organizations?
5. How did you find this hotel? (Internet, travel agency, word-of-mouth)
6. If we have further questions would it be ok to contact you? How? Would you like us to send you the conclusions of our thesis?

BIOGRAPHY

Born in 1984, Thibault Michot is the only child of loving parents Alain and Maryse Michot. He spent his 22 first years in France, sparing his time between studies, friends and winter sports.

After having enrolled in an international business school in Paris, he studied economics one year in New York City, Tokyo and Shanghai, as part of an exchange program. Being totally fascinated by Japanese culture, history, way of thinking and people, he decided to come back in Tokyo in 2007 to work for nearly one year in a marketing company.

In 2008 fate, or luck, took him to new adventures in Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok where he enrolled in a Development Studies program. He gained valuable knowledge about the fascinating changing world that surrounds him. During his first year in Thailand he became aware of the issues that are related to tourism; realizing that this global domain can have a huge impact on peoples' life, he decided to investigate about what structural changes should be made to the tourism industry, in order to make the world a better place to live and to visit.

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