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**Strategies To Guide The Development Of Responsible Tourism At Destination Level: A Case Of Kovalam**

An ideal responsible tourism development at a destination should show a significant growth in social, economic and environmental aspects with active participation of the local community. The responsible tourism initiative started in Kerala in 2007 as an effective form of community participatory tourism at different destinations namely Kumarakom, Kovalam, Wayanad (Vythiri) and Thekkady where tourism activities created both positive and negative impacts on the community in terms of social, economic and environmental aspects. Anecdotal evidences state that comparing to all other three destinations of the first phase, Kovalam is still lacking the development of RT and activities related to it.

This study is conducted to understand both the benefits and drawbacks of responsible tourism initiative on the local community and tourism development of Kovalam which is selected as the study area. The three variables used in the study in order to measure the effectiveness of the initiative are Implementation of responsible tourism, Tourism development and Impacts on local community. The study includes both secondary and primary data. Primary data was collected through a questionnaire survey of 23 micro enterprise units, 9 homestays, 21 people of local community who are not a part of responsible tourism and key informant interviews of stakeholders including panchayat officials, RT coordinators at different level, and local people. The study found out the various areas lacking at the destination and had introduced strategies and proposals for the improvement of responsible tourism focusing on economic growth, employment generation, destination development, health tourism, stakeholder collaboration, marketing and communication and infrastructure development for the development of a socially responsible tourism industry with inclusive economic growth.

***Keywords:*** *Responsible tourism, local community, social, economic and environmental benefits, effectiveness*