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# Case Study on Self-Help Groups Intervention and Destination Sustainability in Kerala: Input-Output-Outcome Model

## Abstract

The study aims to explore the linkages between self-help groups (SHGs) and destination sustainability. These linkages, examined through literature review, interview, and observation methodology to explore these linkages. The study observed that the impact of SHGs on tourist destinations could be assessed as changes due to their intervention in destination areas following Input-Output- Outcome Model. The community-level sustainability initiatives are construed as input variables; the result of initiatives is considered output, and the subsequent changes in the area as outcome variables. The study assumes significance in assessing the impact of community intervention based on local action initiated through SHGs with outcome variables generated from the locality concerned. Further, the study gives a more holistic approach to understanding the intervention strategies of SHGs pivoting around the coexistence of good guest-host relationships in tourism.

**Keywords:** self-help groups, destination sustainability, input-output-outcome, linkages, India

## 1. Introduction

Self Help Group (SHG) is considered an essential mechanism of economic upliftment of local communities, particularly women (Shaikh Khatibi & Indira, 2011; Swain & Wallentin, 2012). Irrespective of the location and social strata, SHG actively supports and strengthens local-level community-based developmental initiatives (Anand et al., 2020) and improves their quality of life in the context of the global development agenda, particularly sustainable development goals (SDG). Though the government and non-governmental support are inevitable for the survival of SHGs (Kaushik & Singh, 2010), their contribution to local development is vital. SHG intervention is much more prominent in developing economies like India, as they enhance their socio-economic and political empowerment, which facilitates better social life (Geethanjali & Prabhakar, 2013; Brody et al., 2017). Further, such intervention strengthens their financial decision-making ability, social networking and earns social respect while garnering psychological strength (Brody et al., 2017).

Generally, Enterprise development based on local resources is a widely used strategy among SHGs for economic development (Hasalkar et al., 2005; Singh et al., 2011). Besides this, SHGs are actively involved in group loans, thrift and savings, skill development, and exploring local resources individually or collectively to meet their livelihood (Sharma et al., 2012; Ghosh & Bose, 2017). All these initiatives primarily directed towards the development of social entrepreneurship at the grassroots level (Dutta Gupta & Chatterjee, 2018)

In tourism, SHG plays a pivotal role in community-driven development activities to a greater extent by ensuring self-sufficiency and community well-being (Ryu et al., 2020). In this context, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2002) had stated that tourism could be a vital force for developing disadvantaged people of the society, particularly; communities with few options for development; thus, perceived as a panacea

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for growth. However, the intervention of SHGs in tourism is unable to garner the attention of mainstream society. Though there is reservation in involving local communities in tourism (Bushell & Eagles, 2007), the community-based SHGs are considered as one of the major stakeholders for the local infrastructure development (Kasi, 2015) and organizers of green practices in destinations (Harikrishnan, 2012). SHG is also part of various responsible tourism practices. It plays a prominent role in making tourism more decentralized and community-oriented to meet livelihood requirements through resource reorganization strategies and value chain systems at the destination level (The Shooting Star, 2016).

SHG's contribution towards destination sustainability is action-specific, for instance, intervention for waste management, enterprise development, and so on; thus, a comprehensive understanding of various dimensions of sustainability is found essential to strengthen community-based tourism programs. Intervene in local tourism resources appropriation, SHGs are widely used in different forms of tourism (Ravindran & Vinodan, 2009). Such grassroots level institutions are considered as an appropriate tool for maximizing the community benefit from tourism.

In some instances, they are the sole stakeholders in completing the entire supply chain process of tourism with lots of value additions. In other words, the kind of local actions initiated towards these grass-root level institutions for meeting the local specific sustainability, which supports the overall development of tourism, needs to be examined. As an institution, SHG is not free from operational limitations owing to manifold reasons which are seemingly inherent to the locality in which they are operating. Their contribution to local development through tourism must be strengthened while exploring their multidimensional intervention to promote local sustainability.

In this direction, the study tried to explore the changes that occurred at destinations due to SHG intervention in the framework of the input-output and outcome. Such a framework-based approach can, in turn, support the measurement of the impact of the community on destination sustainability. The assessment of the relationship between input-output-outcome will enhance the quality of community-cantered development discourses; thus, strengthening the grassroots level institutional studies in academics that are hitherto unexplored in the domain of tourism.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Input-output-outcome model

When we examine the genesis of the input-output and outcome model, the model development philosophy is associated with the theory of change and a tool for measuring social change (Jones, 2012). The evaluation of development initiatives uses a different methodology. Input-output-outcome-based evaluation is widely used in development parlance. This framework generally discusses how changes to input variables can generate output and ensure the desired outcome of the development (Phan, 2013). In developmental transformation, the input resources were converted into output and an outcome to attain the desired objectives, i.e., impacts (Janger et al., 2017). The input-output-outcome model is considered an appropriate tool for the grass-root level impact assessment (Procházková & Nosková, 2020).

The input-output-outcome model found relevance in the context of performance evaluation of programs both funded and self-supported (Weber et al., 2019). As the output and outcome are considered short-term results, it is essential to assess their impact after completing a certain period (Phan, 2013). In practice, this is the process of investigating the transformation from one stage to another (Weber et al., 2019). More specifically, the model tries to understand how input transformed to output and how these outputs converted into the perceived outcome of a program at a region or locality under investigation. This model facilitates evaluating the programs based on efficiency and effectiveness at the stakeholders' level.

## 2.2. Community and tourism

According to Spenceley (2008), "A community-based tourism (CBT) initiative is a project or program, or collective action of a group of people that belong to a community that decided to participate in, or develop together a small to medium scale local tourism industry." (p. 285).

Community participation is considered a key concept in CBT development. Often recognized as a form of voluntary action in which individuals assume responsibilities and garner opportunities, explore self-governance, respond to external influence that impact has a bearing on their life, and exploit collaborative opportunities (Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020). Broader sense, the community seeks to address the environmental, social, and cultural sustainability concerns arising out of tourism while facilitating quality visitor experience and learning. In this direction, CBT supports community ownership, planning, and evaluation of tourism projects, community pride, quality of life, unique local culture, helping to develop cross-cultural learning, understanding and respecting cultural differences, and ensuring equity in benefit sharing (Yanes et al., 2019).

There are a large number of discourses underway on, development; inclusive growth, conservation and livelihood, participatory management of resources, and so on, besides studies on negative and positive impacts of tourism (Liu, 2003; Walker & Salt, 2006; Dassah, 2013; Brody et al., 2017). Tourism has significant potential as a tool for the socio-economic upliftment of the community through participation and sustainable appropriation of resources (Hunter & Howard, 1995; Eshun & Tichaawa, 2020). Community intervention in tourism was appreciated by many researchers and argued as a vital component of the developmental trajectory (Ali et al., 2017; Kala & Bagri, 2018; Soldić Frleta & Smolčić Jurdana, 2020). Community empowerment and local economic development bring socio-economic, cultural, and even political benefits to the middle and lower communities (Scheyvens, 2000). Lopes et al. (2020) investigated the possibilities of countryside movements and their impact on communities and how these movements helped address the developmental needs of rural people. Pigram and Wehab (2005) and Sharpley (2002) call for a sustainable approach for destination development, which meets both developmental and environmental issues in the same platform. Environmentally and culturally sound development is warranted for meeting the livelihood requirements. It is expected that the net benefit should reach the destination communities irrespective of the forms and types of tourism operations, and it also calls for an effective framework to achieve these objectives (Ashley et al., 2001; Butler, 1991). The delivery of net benefits to the community is also a concern to the policymakers and practitioners, thus making it imperative to have mechanisms, which address the local sustainability issues that have to be formulated (Li, 2006; Simpson, 2008).

As claimed, community participation in tourism generates direct benefits for the people living in or around destination areas (Li, 2006; Bandarage, 2013; Eom & Han, 2019). However, the community's poorest members often lack the technical skills to secure employment to provide a sustainable livelihood. Though most destination level jobs are informal, like souvenir selling, cultural performances, sale of charcoal, collection of camping fees, and so on, such jobs can generate income for the community (Kunasekaran et al., 2017). These income-generating activities generally adhere to local sustainability requirements. It has been argued that local communities were more likely to adopt positive attitudes towards the local issues and explore local means to address the same (Moscardo & Murphy, 2016).

As a widely accepted tool for poverty reduction and linking environmental stewardship with broader aspects of socio-cultural development, tourism has made a significant contribution to development (Kunasekaran et al., 2017). However, as an important economic sector for most countries and regions, more comprehensive questions of politics, power, identity, inequality, and growth within the tourism industry need to be identified in livelihood through stewardship (Bandarage, 2013). Countries such as South Africa, Uganda, Gambia, Nepal, Ecuador, and the Czech Republic have already explored the stewardship principles through community-based tourism, performed in destination management and livelihood mostly with non-governmental organizations

(NGOs) (UNWTO, 2012). Such stewardship paved the way for the enhancement of tourism products as well as an increase in employment opportunities directly or through support services (Ashley et al., 2001). According to Murphy and Murphy (2004), ownership with the destination, communities are not necessary for delivering benefits to them.

Waged and self-employment are common in small and unorganized or semi-organized sectors, like tourism (Pellis et al., 2017). For instance, local artisans often find livelihood opportunities in and around tourist destinations across India (Meera & Vinodan, 2017). It has been noticed that despite a large number of enterprising options available to the destination communities, organized effort to mobilize their neighborhood relations and its synergy in this direction is seemingly limited (Tinsley & Lynch, 2001; Giampiccoli et al., 2020). It has been observed that such locally initiated enterprises expand economic options by creating employment for the unskilled, skilled, and semi-skilled or build up assets (natural, physical, financial, human, and social), to improve the residents' ability to influence the economy by expanding local markets (Lopes et al., 2020). Thus, contributing to the endogenous products and branding the destination. Such enterprises can also help reduce the leakages and ensure the multiplier effect within the locality itself.

### 2.3. Self-help groups in tourism

SHGs are locally initiated associations representing community participation, promoted by NGOs, government agencies, or banks, found in a wide range of financial and non-financial sectors, which are often recognized as the platform for accumulating savings and credits (Parthasarathy et al., 2018). These associations provide credit to their members capable of using their funds, grants, and borrow funds to promote savings. Thereby, they yield moderate economic benefit by reducing the dependence on moneylenders, providing women employment, disseminating development ideas and information, and providing opportunities for intervention in other social, political and economic sectors of a locality (Parthasarathy et al., 2018). Generally, such groups were formed as village development groups for integrated village development through financial and non-financial intervention to livelihood and empowerment as a basis and extending synergy towards health, education, natural resource management, and microfinance operation for neighborhood welfare. In this direction, the World Bank (2001) had commended that the SHG's are the institutions to explore the latent shared values of the neighborhood through individual action in a collectively desirable direction.

Studies, both empirical as well as theoretical, show SHG's as catalysts in building human and social capital to move towards sustainable resource management, addressing livelihood issues, particularly of women and the marginalized sections of the society (D'Silva & Pai 2003, Dattar & Prakash 2004). SHG institutions were geared to supplement the social capital endowment by fostering mutual trust, co-operation, cohesiveness, and nurturing equity irrespective of social divisions like castes, class, and gender (Bhattacharya & Hussain 2004). Arguments that suspect the legitimacy of such institutions in lowering poverty and other social ailments through synergistic social grouping and social capital investment were also very strong in the developmental discourse (Eom & Han, 2019). To a certain extent, contentions were relevant because most of the occupations of SHG engaged in subsistence farming, non-timber forest produces (NTFP) collection, fuelwood collection, raising livestock, etc., were seasonal, and none of these was serving as a permanent income source. Providing stable livelihood opportunities to members through SHG- based income-generating activities is the most crucial task facing the SHG's (Dattar & Prakash 2004). Utilize the potential of SHG's in poverty reduction, both in rural and urban areas, there is a need to link them actively with livelihood generating activities like tourism, which simultaneously uses natural and cultural resources with a proactive outlook.

Verma (2005) pointed out the role of participatory and community-based organizations in promoting tourism, which is yet to be recognized. Innovative concepts like rural tourism, pro-poor tourism, ecotourism, etc., were implemented through participatory institutions. As a tool for uplifting the poor by creating sustainable

employment opportunities to expand existing businesses, tourism transfers business opportunities from the public to community groups (Eslami et al., 2019). A viable framework is essential to root these provisions to the grass-root level, particularly to reorganize the community (Gannon et al., 2020). SHGs, as described earlier, are a solid foundation to unearth this synergy to operationalize the economic value of tourism to the fulfillment of developmental aspirations of destination communities. As a bottom-up approach to tourism development, CBT is considered a form of tourism that aims to empower local communities to appropriate tourism and related resources and make them self-reliant. (Pongponrat & Pongquan, 2007). As a local institutional mechanism for resource appropriation, SHGs found significant in strengthening economic activities at the grassroots level (Kalita, 2010). Such community institutions are often considered a tool for promoting responsible tourism practices at the community level (Kumar & Jasheena, 2016). Further, SHGs act as a community-driven mechanism to promote local-level resource management and meet tourist needs without compromising conservation values and livelihood considerations (Saxena et al., 2020). Such interventions are yet to be discussed in academia, and the operational level analysis is also yet to get attention.

## 2.4. Self-help groups and tourism in India

In India, the intervention of SHGs in tourism is still in its infancy. A number of SHGs were formed or are under the pipeline to cater to tourism-related activities. Notably, the Government of India (GOI) initiated rural tourism programs that have been operationalized through SHGs. The evaluation study of the Ministry of Tourism shows that Rajurajpur, a handicraft village of Odisha, formed a maximum number (86 Nos. out of 384 SHGs formed across India) of SHGs, for a special kind of handicraft known as *Patochitra* related activities (Ministry of Tourism, 2007b). It also states that most of these SHGs were not operationalized as it was envisaged; due to various reasons like lack of tourism awareness, absence of follow-up, and so on. Dhan foundation (2009) in Karaikudi and Kazhugumalay of Tamil Nadu, under the Endogenous Tourism program, with the support of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and GOI, has operationalized 105 and 107 tourism-based SHGs, respectively. They explored the tourism potential of cultural and heritage products of Madurai districts and the Sivaganga district of the state. It would be noteworthy to cite other cases of SHG intervention in tourism activities in the country as well. The Anegundi heritage village of Karnataka has SHGs to rebuild the community space system for waste management, eco transportation, tourism awareness programs, and bio tourism. Similarly, the ecotourism programs of Uttarkhand employ SHGs in its destination activities, including trekking (Ministry of Tourism, 2007b).

Further, the Mukutmanipur in the Bankura district of West Bengal, Seraj Valley of Himachal Pradesh, Kumarol in Manipur, Kaziranga, Durgapur, and Sualkuchi of Assam, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu sought SHGs for enterprise development, waged, and self-employment in tourism development (Meera & Vinodan, 2017). In this discussion, it is pertinent to state that some of these SHGs had adopted an integrated development plan for the area while encashing their tourism potential. For instance, SHGs under the Ballavpur Danga rural tourism program of West Bengal have provided drinking water, health, education, housing, sanitation, basic infrastructure, and organized social action against alcoholism, gender issues, and inequity in community development (Ministry of Tourism, 2007b). These observations indicate that most of the provincial states had recognized the importance of SHGs for the local-level development of tourism. In other words, they have realized the importance of local-level institutions for promoting community-based tourism programs to strengthen the sustainability of tourism.

## 3. Study objectives

The study aims to understand the role of local-level institutions and their contribution to the locality. For this purpose, it is essential to understand the community-level initiatives involved and examine how such intervention transforms the community through tourism-related resources appropriation. In this direction,

the study tries to understand the contribution of community-level intervention to destination sustainability. Accordingly, the study adopted an input-output-outcome model to explore the process of transformation at the community level

## 4. Study background

Kerala is the southernmost provincial state of India known for its social development and high Human Development Index (HDI) indicators. Suryanarayana et al. (2011) had pointed out that Kerala scores the highest HDI indicators. Accordingly, the state is considered the most advanced state of India, referred to as the Scandinavia of India in many respects (Harriss & Törnquist, 2015), sharing many similarities with Sweden (Karlsson, 2018). The quality of life in Kerala is better than in Italy, Greece, and Russia (Natuveli et al., 2007). The state's infant mortality rate is comparable with the U.S. and poverty rates close to 7.05%, where the national average of India is 21.92% (The New Indian Express, 2016). The state with good quality of life and moderate per capita income, almost distributed equally across the population with a high level of social awareness followed by strong political participation in resource management (The Yale review of international studies, 2013), justify the selection of the state for the study.

## 5. Study approach

Studies (Haywood, 1988; Inskeep, 1991) reveal that the element of community involvement and participation is relatively less, even in the case of perceived community-based tourism, as the full ownership and management rights are yet to hand over to the communities concerned. Through limited intervention, local communities need to share the generated benefits with government agencies or private players. Even then, such minute intervention has made some changes among destination communities, often leading to the Involvement and empowerment of women and other marginalized groups in society (Gannon et al., 2020).

## 6. Methodology

This study attempts to understand major intervention areas of SHGs in tourism in Kerala and its resultant output and outcome, supporting sustainability practices. Such a study is imperative for a fair and feasible understanding of the impact of SHG intervention in tourism in the SDG arena. The investigators initially consulted 18 Kudumbashree coordinators (responsible for local level community or neighborhood mobilization) from five districts, Kannur-Four, Kozhikode-Four, Wayanad-Three, Thrissur-Four, Ernakulam-Three. Followed by four NGOs (responsible for mobilizing SHGs and making them employable) from three districts (Kannur -Two, Thrissur-One, Wayanad- One) were consulted. Thirty-five members of various SHGs (engaged in tourism and related work in and around destination areas) across five districts (Kannur-One, Kozhikode-Eight, Wayanad -Six, Thrissur-Five, Ernakulam-Six), four staff members of District Tourism Promotion Councils (DTPC) of Kannur and Kozhikode districts, and other tourism stakeholders (two each either tour operator or guides, connected to local shops and establishments operated by SHGs) from twelve destinations across the state were also consulted for the study. An abstract of the diverse intervention of SHGs and the major intervention areas leading to destination sustainability was examined to complete the study, as it helps analyze the impact. The study *inter alia* probed the following to meet the study objectives; the sustainability initiatives of group members at the destinations, the result gained through these initiatives, and analyzed changes in their respective areas due to these efforts. While organizing the study, sustainability initiatives were considered as input variables, the achieved results were identified as output variables, and the perceived changes were the outcome of these initiatives. The impact is construed as the long-term effects resulting from these changes. Investigators identified specific questions that could give an abstract from the local community. For cross-checking their arguments on a few outputs and outcome variables explored, fifteen guests from each

destination were also interviewed in the subsequent stage of the study. A good number of secondary sources were also part of the finalization of the study, particularly reports of local self-governing institutions (LSI) and SHGs in the respective area, besides the investigator's observations.

## 6.1. SHG interventions in tourist destinations of Kerala

While assessing the organizational scenario of SHG intervention in tourism, and its impacts on destinations, the study should survey the intervening parties and their mode of operation. The stakeholder consultation during this study helped identify the major intervening partners in SHG orientation towards tourism development in Kerala. For the convenience of the study, the SHG intervention in the state was divided into two; (1) SHGs under Kudumbashree and (2) SHGs under other locally supported NGOs and financially outsourced were considered.

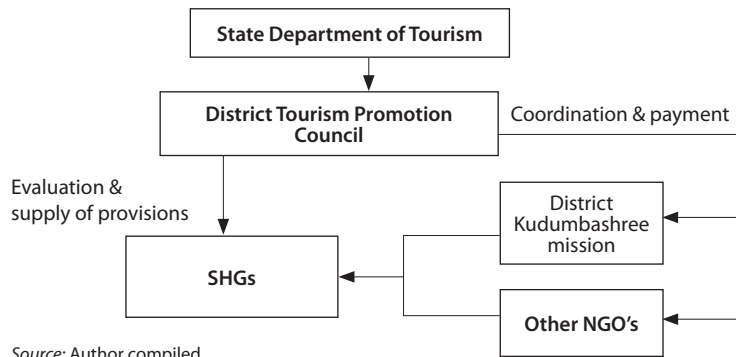
The Kudumbashree program of Kerala is a globally acknowledged model of poverty eradication and women empowerment at the grass-root level with the gender, environmental, and democratic process, jointly initiated by the Government of Kerala and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD, 2008). It is a women-centered community-based poverty eradication program suited to the community's needs and based on the availability of resources from the surrounding environment, thus protecting it from degradation. Today, Kudumbashree is Asia's largest women's self-help group formulated *inter alia* for thrift and credit operations, micro-enterprises, and social sector interventions in collaboration with local self-government (Parthasarathy et al., 2018). Kudumbashree program, which functions on the principles of participatory democracy, recognizes the poor as the active participators in decision-making. Institutions under Kudumbashree follow a three-tier pattern. At the local level, neighborhood groups (NHGs), area development societies (ADS) ward level, and community development societies (CDS) at the area/town level.

Besides, Kudumbashree, other NGOs, or destination-based groups also organized to participate in tourism development programs, often termed as local SHGs. The area of operation and the nature of intervention were decided jointly by these groups, and works were allocated accordingly. For instance, one SHG with eleven members promoted by the Ernakulam District Tourism Society (EDTS) has been working as a beach hostess in the Ernakulam district in the state. Production of indigenous products and other tourism services like transportation, hospitality, tour guiding, etc., was where such groups usually intervene. The initiatives of Vayali, a local NGO at Arangottukara Thrissur district, Kalpeta Bamboo cluster of Wayanad district, were notable examples of such local intervention.

## 6.2. Destination level operations of self-help groups

Department of Tourism (DoT), Government of Kerala (GoK), in association with the District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC), mobilizes SHG to the ambient of tourism in Kerala. For sourcing the SHGs, DTPC seeks the help of the District Kudumbashree Mission (DKM) or NGOs (Figure 1). In some instances, standalone SHGs were also encouraged to participate. The coordination of activities of community members and management of remuneration is vested with the district authorities of these agencies, i.e., DKM. The first week of every month, the cashier of the neighborhood group has to collect wages from their district office. In other NGO-sponsored members, the amount is transferred to their office, and the members have to collect it from there. Here DTPC is acting as a nodal agency for monitoring and evaluating the program by conducting an interim meeting, awareness classes on the environment, and local issues, which usually occur once in two months. They also discuss their destinations' various matters and issues during that period. The NHG or NGO representative attends the meeting on behalf of other members and presents their problems and grievances. Besides these, the DTPC also provides the necessities for the SHGs, for instance, articles required for beach hostesses for cleaning like gloves, sickle, dress materials, etc., supplied yearly basis.

**Figure 1**  
Operational framework of SHG interventions



Source: Author compiled.

## 7. Input-output-outcome model of SHG intervention

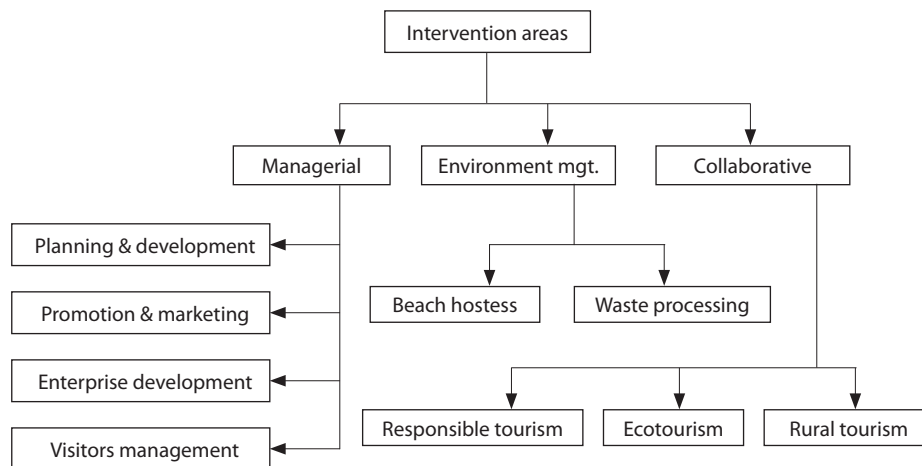
The present study tried to examine the relationship between input-output and the outcome of destination-level SHGs in Kerala. Accordingly, the input is defined as the initiative /intervention of SHGs in tourism operations. The output defined as the result of initiatives and the subsequent changes in the area is construed as outcome variables.

Understanding changes caused by the intervention of SHGs, either positive or negative, is imperative to consider the changes from short-term and long-term perspectives. SHG intervention in tourism in the context of Kerala through Kudumbashree and other NGOs operational since 2005. Accordingly, the period between 2005 and 2014 has been considered for outcome analysis, and the period starts from 2015 to 2020 for analyzing impact. The effectiveness in analyzing impact in the present context of the study is to be elaborated.

### 7.1. Intervention strategies of SHGs – Input variables

The study considers the intervention strategies of SHG as the input variables of the present study. SHG intervention in tourism can be categorized in three different areas; managerial activities, management of the environment of destinations, and Involvement in various special tourism programs (Figure 2). The following session will brief these interventions and their operational modalities.

**Figure 2**  
Intervention areas of SHGs in tourism in Kerala



Source: Author designed.



### 7.1.1. Managerial interventions

Managerial interventions consist of destination planning and development, destination marketing, visitors' management, and enterprise development.

- **Planning and development:** Community involvement is inevitable to meet the sustainability requirements at the grass-root level (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). As the top-down approach in resource appropriation is less preferred in developmental discourses, the local people's opinion should be considered. Since most of the resources are utilized to meet tourist satisfaction, the community found it difficult to meet their own need while developing tourism in most cases, leading to guest host conflicts (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). However, in practice, such importance is not given in the tourism planning and developmental stage (Eom & Han, 2019). It has been observed that local communities come to the scene during the introduction of a program, whether government or NGOs sponsored, and their subsequent intervention is seemingly minimal. However, intervention is promoted under the aegis of Local self-government institutors (LSI) of the respective area. For example, the model Rural tourism village at Kumbalangi of Ernakulam district, Edakkal Cave-a, a heritage site at Wayanad district, Kerala, has accommodated many SHGs in their tourism product development and facilitation program.
- **Promotion and marketing:** Promotion and marketing of tangible and intangible products of the destination are crucial for their sustenance. Destinations maintained and managed through SHGs are actively involved in finding opportunities for showcasing their products in the markets. Members of the artists' groups propitiate different art forms for visitors, participating in local and regional, sometimes even national or international level exhibitions and business meets, thus bringing impetus to this initiative. For instance, members from Parambikulam Tiger Reserve, local community organizations participate in exhibitions to showcase their indigenous products, particularly their traditional medicinal practices.
- **Enterprise development:** Destination facilitation through enterprise development involves exploring various business potentials available at the destination with mobilization of money and social synergy (Ravindran & Vinodan, 2009). For instance, the formation of micro-enterprises or other forms of enterprise creation is encouraged among the local people to appropriate local resources for tourists' needs. These direct and indirect interventions include developing enterprises such as travel agencies, tour operators, guides and escort services, local transport, sale of handicraft and other local products, ancillary shops, and hospitality services, i.e., homestays and restaurants through collective capital and community cohesion. Moreover, many facilitating functions are also undertaken in collaboration with existing enterprises, the government, and the private sector. In practice, community-based enterprises are formed on a small-scale basis with a limited amount of capital and other factors of production. Though there were many lacunas identified during enterprise formation, especially concerning capital mobilization, lack of business skills, quality concerns, competition, and so on, through the LSG and NGO's support, SHGs were able to minimize most of such issues. Experience shows that a large number of enterprises are formed under Kudumbashree in Kerala in and around tourist destinations to strengthen destination facilitation function.
- **Visitors management:** SHG members were either involved in visitors' management as escorts, guides, or interpreters. For instance, SHGs at Meenmutty waterfalls at Wayanad sent their members as escorts to the destination, and they assisted the visitors in different matters. Most of the ecotourism destinations of the stage engage local community members who are a part of SHGs as guides or interpreters. They often give instructions on the do's and don'ts of the destination and make arrangements for food and accommodation, particularly for backpackers.

Besides this, there are several domains where these SHGs are involved at the organizational level, based on local specific requirements.

### 7.1.2. Environment management program

SHGs in Kerala engaged in tourism destinations are directly and indirectly involved in various environment management programs. Two major widely appreciated strategies are as follows:

- **Beach hostess:** One of the community-based destination management programs under environment management is beach hostess. Of the fourteen districts of the state, nine districts are coastal districts. Except for Kollam and Thrissur, the investigation revealed that all other coastal districts have Kudumbashree NHGs. Ernakulam district has both Kudumbashree SHGs as well as a locally initiated group. The Beach hostess program commenced in the year 2006 at the selected beaches of Kerala. Beach hostess is a waged employment program for local people who live below the poverty line. The selection of beach hostesses is primarily based on the family's income level and employability, with a special preference for widows, unmarried women, and others less deprived of society. One destination carries two to four groups (one unit of beach hostess divided into two to four groups) depending upon the area to be employed. For example, Muzhapilangad of Kannur district and Alappuzha beach employs 15-17 members divided into groups, and each group is entrusted with one km area of the beach. As of now, there are 25 such SHGs operational across coastal districts of the state of Kerala.
- **Waste management program:** The waste management program is a destination-specific waste management program initiated by the Kudumbashree mission funded by the DoT in collaboration with LSG at Kovalam, Kumily, and Kumarakom. In Kovalam (one of the international beaches located near to capital city -Thiruvananthapuram of Kerala). Community members could achieve cent percent of diversions of biodegradable waste from wayside dumping and burning in all its areas. They could recover more than seventy-five percent of biodegradable wastes and ninety percent of non-degradable discards. It is important to note that the biogases produced from these operations were also used for electricity and cooking. The SHGs were also encouraged to make eco-friendly products such as palm sheath plates, cloth bags, paper bags, and coconut utensils to reduce pollution on the beach.

In a nutshell, SHG members were associated with resource conservation, employment generation, and environmental protection by building capacities in the community to reduce waste by adopting efficient resource use patterns, which resulted in employment generation.

### 7.1.3. Collaborative integration through intervention initiatives of SHGs

The collaborative integration of SHGs is prominent among various forms of tourism in Kerala. The integration of the community to various forms of tourism programs is implemented through SHGs, and; thereby local community becomes the major stakeholder of these tourism programs. The state's commissioned responsible tourism, ecotourism, and rural tourism programs are implemented at the grassroots level as community-based tourism in collaboration with SHGs. Details of such collaborative integration of SHGs in various forms of tourism is presented as follows:

- **Responsible tourism:** In Kerala, the DoT initiated the Responsible Tourism (R.T.) program to make the destination more sustainable by clubbing the synergy of the local community with local development. Kumarakom, Thekkady, Wayanad, and Vizhinjam have already implemented R.T. practices. The operational modalities followed the linkage between local production and the tourism establishment, initially with hospitality enterprises, i.e., hotels, resorts, homestays, and restaurants in these destinations. The LSG was in charge of linking hospitality establishments to local SHGs to ensure the supply of materials of the right quality, right quantity, at the right time at the right place. The SHGs have been asked to organize small-scale production of raw material required for hospitality enterprises, sale of traditional crafts, and other ethnic products. For instance, 15 hotels and many resorts have collaborated with local 25 SHGs. Their contribution goes beyond value chain creation as few of them have started to produce environment-friendly products

like cloth bags to reduce plastics. In Wayanad, nine Kudumbashree NHGs were engaged in responsible tourism initiatives along with two tribal societies. In Thekkady, 15 SHGs were involved in selling more than ten non-perishable goods to hospitality enterprises. In Kovalam also the same practice began to ensure a smooth supply of locally available products to the selected hotels. The observation indicates that these SHGs are not mere beneficiaries of R.T.; they even own local business enterprises.

- **Ecotourism:** Kerala is the pioneer in developing ecotourism in India, introducing its first planned ecotourism destination at Thenmala. Local community benefit is one of the unchallenging objectives of ecotourism operations. Thenmala projects materialized these by mobilizing the local SHGs formed under Kudumbashree. The LSG performs both a supervisory and controlling role in the SHG integration process as they monitor and extend assistance to SHG's in collaboration with the Thenmala Ecotourism Promotion Society (TEPS). This collaboration is mainly to support local women. They opened shops and cafeterias within the project area, trained local youth to utilize self-employment opportunities, supported community-led ecotourism products like managing unique waterfalls within the forest area, and conduct bird-watching trails, trekking programs, butterfly watching, and so on. The SHGs, under collaboration, offer both tangible as well as intangible products to the tourists. For instance, the SHG members undertake the production and sale of indigenous products while propitiating cultural resources.
- **Rural tourism:** In Kerala, the first integrated rural tourism village Kumbalangi, nearly 1000 community members have benefitted through managerial as well as operational level intervention through SHGs. While offering several indigenous products, an array of tourist-centric services are also offered at the destination. For instance, the local community members engaged in tender coconut production and selling, fish farming, fishing with Chinese net, crab farming, basket making, weaving coconut leaves, coir making, country boating, and pottery, and tourist were encouraged to take part in the rural life. The LSG is coordinating the activities and facilitating community intervention through local institutions.

Though the state is a pioneer in promoting various products or approach-based tourism, SHG intervention focuses mainly on these three forms of tourism. Several actions plans are in the pipeline to include local SHGs in other forms of tourism.

## 7.2. Results of intervention - Output variable

The observation and interaction during 2005 to 2014 and subsequent document verification of various SHGs based destination level programs indicate a significant change in various phases and areas of community intervention. These changes include increasing women's participation in tourism, synergized sectoral integration, and improved linkages, particularly backward linkages. The efforts to improve the visitor experience are also found promising among locally initiated groups. There is an enhanced brand image of the destination while reducing the leakages and promoting cultural regeneration and social synergy. In this backdrop, the following sessions will examine each of these results in detail:

### 7.2.1. Enhanced women's representation

The Involvement of women in destination development and management, through the decision making and its execution, acts as a catalyst in addressing the destination management issues (Bhalla et al., 2016). These interventions primarily explore the possibilities of income generation channelized through SHGs of these areas. Women, particularly those who are very poor, were getting the opportunity to interact with tourism-related operations by engaging in different options available under tourism destination development. As mentioned, destination facilitation through enterprise creations was the most prominent one in this direction; through SHGs, local women developed different enterprises (Ravindran & Vinodan, 2009). They mobilize synergy of neighborhood relations, nearby destination areas engaged in catering, handicrafts, grocery shops, etc., by availing the micro and other financial provisions available in their vicinity. They also engaged in environment

management programs viz Beach hostess across the state and Zero Waste Kovalam for a regular income, significantly benefiting the destination. The majority of the SHGs directly or indirectly intervened in tourism and related operations were women, as the fundamental nature of the formation of SHGs in India is primarily women-centric. This institutional support helped women enhance their confidence in mainstream and economic independence through leadership development.

### *7.2.2. Enhanced sectoral integration*

The study shows an increased interlinkage between different sectors for strengthening the supply chain in tourism and hospitality services. Agricultural produce was extended to hospitality enterprises as raw materials under the aegis of responsible tourism programs at Kovalam, Thekkady, Kumarakom, and Wayanad. The local SHGs have taken the vacant/barren lands and used them for cultivation, mainly under Kudumbashree, and negotiated with hospitality enterprises of the region to supply materials to them. Moreover, it made it possible to get organic vegetables and cereals to these enterprises for a fair price. Besides this, they started several support services across the state to smooth the tourism industry's supply chain. Supply of food items, transport services, production of handloom, and other indigenous products also bring linkages to the tourism delivery system. Such an initiative often adds value to the destination on a varied scale and an economy of scale in operations.

### *7.2.3. Enhanced visitor experience*

As Mihalic (2000) has pointed, destination attractiveness (appeal) and proper management of environmental quality of a destination can increase its competitiveness. As Vinodan (2009) has pointed out, the deployment of beach hostesses at almost all beaches of Kerala helped to reduce antisocial elements to a certain extent. It was more visible in destinations of Kerala managed by SHG. A well-informed community and their stringent supervision at the destination reduce the chance of apprehension about the local safety or security issues. They visit their respective operation areas of the beach's morning and evening for cleaning purposes. As all these hostesses were from the respective area, their visits to the beaches became a norm of indirect supervision of the destination helped to reduce the ill elements usually found in those areas. Subsequently, it also helped to ensure the safety of visitors to a great extent and thereby improved the confidence level of visitors leading to frequent visitation and an extended stay at destinations. The local community members and the visitors of Muzhappilangad beach ratify these statements during interrogation. Efforts like crisis management team developed under Kudumbashree in Alappuzha beach and backwaters (known for backwater tourism) at the grassroots level to tackle insurgencies like a tsunami were also commendable in this direction. Further, fair pricing for the locally produced goods and services by SHGs enhances the customer and supplier relationship.

### *7.2.4. Improved destination image*

The endemic product varieties coupled with homely services of the host community by serving as beach hostess, shop keeper, guides and escorts, augment the delivery system to keep the destination identity. The relationship between the local community and tourists has gained momentum towards tourism service delivery, emphasizing an equitable business practice among the commoner. The examples of zero waste Kovalam and initiatives of Kumbalangi residents like rainwater harvesting, biogas plan, etc., were able to lift the image of those two destinations to a greater extent.

### *7.2.5. Reduced leakage*

Leakage refers to the amount of money that leaves the destination due to the import of materials or deployment of outside labor or outsourcing (Jørgensen & McKercher, 2019). Community-based entrepreneurial initiatives often fill the gaps in the supply chain in service delivery. Employing community members and utilizing locally available resources keep the multiplier effect within the vicinity of the destination while promoting multilevel, sectoral involvement, which reduces leakage (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2019). The study indicates that

the SHGs involved in ecotourism destinations fill channels while reaching the customers. They undertake all the activities inside the destination area, and the revenue earned was used to meet household needs like food, clothing, shelter, and education. For example, SHGs under Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (PTR) collect minor forest produce (MFP) from nearby areas and process it and market through their outlets and by selling to outsiders at various locations. To strengthen their marketability, group members explore most of the exhibitions in and around their locality. They undertake local cuisines, handicrafts, and even performance art forms to meet the varied needs of tourists and thereby foster attract visitors to their locality. The interaction shows that these multidimensional involvements helped retain the benefits within the vicinity to a large extent.

#### *7.2.6. Fostered low impact tourism*

Burns's (2004) typology on biodiversity, environmental conservation, and social well-being through agreements of stakeholders' calls for judicious use of resources. Several destination and visitor management techniques developed and locally initiated social marketing in health, environmental education, pollution control, local safety, security, etc., were also implemented through SHGs throughout the state. Interaction with community members and ADS members of Kudumbashree reiterated that rigorous awareness programs and the proliferation of conservation values taught to SHG members, subsequently disseminated among the general public, visitors, and other stakeholders. For instance, in Alappuzha, known for its backwaters popularly known as Venice of East, the NHGs are actively involved in health awareness program during monsoon as the area is prone to water-borne diseases. In ecotourism destinations, sessions focused mainly on complying with the national/state environment protection norms. Data collection and assessment of local endemism of species that foster the protection of the ecological system are also part of such programs. Traditional, and the modern technique of waste management practices, were also adopted in almost all intervened areas.

#### *7.2.7. Cultural regeneration*

Regeneration of different art forms and agri-cultural activities has been witnessed in different parts of the state for the past few years. Such programs reorient the community members to rejuvenate the local traditional and cultural practices by giving opportunities for understanding and mastering them. As an important cultural venue, tourism often acts a means of livelihood improvement among local people. SHGs intervention paved the way for such regeneration on a mass scale. SHG members have redesigned and organized different art forms, which were not practiced on a wider scale or confined to certain rituals. Vayali, a folklore group that organizes different cultural programs and the production and sale of eco-friendly products through SHG, is a notable example in this regard. Several art forms were regenerated and performed, i.e., Panchavadya melam, Shinkari melam, Chendamelam, Thiruvathirakali, Vattakali, Kolkali, etc., under the aegis of Kudumbashree. Private players are also promoting such local cultural presentations under the banner of responsible tourism initiatives in the state. For example, Blue yonder, a Bangalore-based travel firm, promotes local social groups to attract tourists interested in local experience; while promoting local endemism.

#### *7.2.8. Integrated linkage with allied sectors*

Apart from serving the tourism sector directly, the SHGs were also involved in allied sectors, which do not directly affect tourism. Even then, they could help the tourist in many ways like restaurants, handicrafts, irrespective of their locations. It is pertinent to state that such shops or establishments located at destinations could serve the tourist directly. The study identified that such interventions mainly were in consultation with LSGs through localized planning and participative decision-making. Besides these, SHGs have expanded their horizon to other areas like homestay, farm tourism, and so on (Civil Society Magazine, 2016). They were also participating in spice tourism programs by engaging in the production and distribution of spices at various locations of the spice route. It has helped to tap the benefit to the people through various productive economic activities in different established tourism destinations.

### 7.2.9. Improved social synergy

By creating a favorable environment for decision-making and resource-sharing participation, SHGs maintain the destination's cultural and social integrity. It generated mutual trust and co-operation, adhered to financial discipline by inculcating the habit of savings, economic self-reliance, and social solidarity. Such reflections are more in rural areas where community intervention recently gained momentum in tourism and related activities in the state. Rural communities were out of tourism orientation before the formation of SHGs due to lack of exposure, skill and financial constraints, and other social ailments.

### 7.3. Understanding the effect of changes caused by the intervention-outcome variable

The effectiveness of SHGs needs to be assessed in the context of Kerala concerning tourism development. Community-level collaborations are found to be more. The local level institutionalized intervention of the community is substantial in terms of the tourism resource appropriation and community-level intervention. The community-level sustainability initiatives as input brought several results, as discussed above. Such outputs, in turn, contributed towards the outcome. The assessment and the site-based investigation held during the period 2015- 2019 (for five years) and the subsequent review of a document on tourism and SHG in Kerala helps to understand the effect of change caused by SHG intervention in tourist destinations.

The outcome variables explored during the study were perceived changes due to SHG intervention in tourism in the study area. These responses are presented in the form of multidimensional indicators, i.e., environmental, social, and economic (Table 1), which can be used as a measurement scale for the impact assessment of SHG intervention in destination areas. The effects of changes were presented in the following section as intervention outcome variables by considering the study objectives.

**Table 1**  
*Outcome variables of SHG interventions across destinations*

<b>Environmental indications</b>	Environmental awareness & management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environment awareness and education programs and the proliferation of conservation value among all stakeholders.</li> <li>2. Special session on endemic species (aquatic and terrestrial) of respective locality</li> <li>3. Assistance to the district/other local environmental groups in assessment and data collection</li> <li>4. Adherence to the national, regional, and local environmental norms</li> <li>5. Overall protection of ecological process</li> </ol>
	3 R: reduce, reuse, and recycle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adoption of the traditional and modern recycling process</li> <li>2. Segmentation of materials into recyclable and reusable categories</li> <li>3. Encouragement of the visitors to reduce the use of polluting materials</li> </ol>
	Solid waste management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Collection, storage, and processing of waste</li> <li>2. Systematic disposal of degradable and non-degradable waste in an eco-friendly manner.</li> </ol>
	Wastewater management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proper wastewater management, including its storage and disposal.</li> <li>2. The water treatment plant is demanded</li> </ol>
<b>Socio indications</b>	Community* involvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Enhanced community contribution for developmental initiatives</li> <li>2. Showcasing the destination as the community's property.</li> <li>3. The supervisory role of the community in totality has improved</li> </ol>
	Resident** Involvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Residents are participating in further programs of the destination., beach festivals by the local panchayat</li> <li>2. Resident's access to business development, which can minimize the issue of leakages.</li> <li>3. Cooperate with local NGO's and other stakeholders for destination promotion</li> <li>4. Residents avail of benefits of clean and hygiene surroundings</li> </ol>
	Crime and other social anomalies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rigorous supervision on resource appropriation</li> <li>2. Improved safety and fewer security concerns.</li> <li>3. Locally trained and qualified guides and escorts.</li> <li>3. Crime, drug abuse, and other social anomalies are reduced significantly</li> </ol>
	Guest–host interaction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Healthy host-guest interaction</li> <li>2. Availability of more authentic information on local customs and cultural specifications</li> <li>4. Healthy cross-cultural interaction</li> <li>5. Supporting community to act as a custodian of local customs and practices</li> <li>6. Community driven cultural promotion</li> </ol>

**Table 1 (continued)**

<b>Economic indications</b>	Employment (direct and indirect)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Livelihood improvement among communities</li> <li>2. Improved destination image</li> <li>3. Increased employment opportunities both self and wage</li> <li>4. The practice of fair wages at the locality</li> </ol>
	Business motivation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scope for further business development</li> <li>2. Conducive environment for enterprise development</li> <li>3. Motivation to do fair business due to the deliberated social atmosphere</li> <li>4. Enhanced investment in infrastructure</li> <li>5. Building a new generation of responsible consumers</li> <li>6. Encouraging increased consumption of local products</li> </ol>
	Improved quality of life	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The regularity of income supports the standard of living.</li> <li>2. Sustained health and environment education opportunities.</li> <li>3. Development of clean and hygiene environment</li> <li>4. Improved community understanding and social cohesion.</li> </ol>

Source: Author compiled.

\*who are part of the destination area by holding business or assets. \*\*who resides within the destination area.

When we examine the outcome of SHG intervention in various tourism programs, several changes are visible across destinations. Most of these changes strengthen the sustainability dimensions of the destination concerned. These outcome variables promote a healthy guest host relationship while meeting without impairing the conservation and livelihood priorities.

#### 7.4. Long term changes: Impact assessment

Evaluation of the participatory process gives an impetus to the engagement process in developmental initiatives. Such evaluation is more prominent and found essential for community-centered development actions. A standard framework of impact assessment is a vital part of the development process to understand the response of community-level initiatives (World Health Organization [WHO], 2006) to strengthen the stakeholder's role. For every program, it is essential to demonstrate to what extent a particular program has been able to meet its laid down objectives. Such assessment can understand the resources are optimally utilized, and the efforts are properly channelized or not (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009). In the impact assessment process, it has been observed that both short-term and long-term impacts are being discussed. As the community support for tourist destination sustainability has been a widely discoursed domain for the last two decades (Scheyvens, 2000; Bolwell & Weinz, 2008; Nugraha & Junawidata, 2019; Ryu et al., 2020); it is essential to explore its impact in terms of the overall sustainability of the destinations. In this direction, the study gives insights to examine the impact of community-level sustainability initiatives through SHG intervention in the tourism destinations of Kerala.

It has been observed that the intervention of SHGs could facilitate positive host-guests encounters and minimize negative economic, environmental, and social impacts, and generate economic benefits for local people. Thus, creating appropriate business opportunities and enhancing the well-being of host communities (Jørgensen, & Mc Kercher, 2019, Havadi Nagy & Espinosa Segui, 2020). To narrate the process of input-output and outcome model developed in the study and to explore the overall sustainability of the destination as an impact of local-level SHG intervention, it is essential to understand the visible transformations in the destination areas derived through the above discussion. Table 2 indicates the destination level SHG intervention and its corresponding output and outcome identified to explore the long-term impact.

**Table2**  
**Highlights of the sustainability impact**

Input	Output	Outcome	Sustainability impact
Community Intervention in green practices	Adherence to the Pollution control Programme	Clean and hygienic environment and management	Ecological sustainability
Community involvement in destination management	Community consciousness and vigilance	Enhanced safety and security	Social sustainability
Community's cultural presentation	Rejuvenation of cultural properties	Improved cross-cultural understanding and acceptance	Cultural sustainability
Community Engagement in operations	Development of local enterprises	Improved quality of life	Economic sustainability
Intervention through representation	Women representation in resource management	Enhanced sphere for women in tourism destinations	Political sustainability

Source: Author designed.

The above table is only symbolic of glancing at how the local level initiatives of SHGs lead towards various sustainability dimensions. Every aspect of intervention directly or indirectly transformed towards one or two dimensions of sustainability. For instance, the development and presentation of art forms help to improve visitor experiences and at the same time help the artist in earning his livelihood. This action is transforming towards both cultural as well as economic dimensions of sustainability.

Similarly, community involvement in destination management helped create community consciousness and vigilance in protecting the destination. Therefore, it has been observed that the safety and security level of the area has improved. Enhanced safety and security are one of the major considerations for the social sustainability of the destination. Though assessing every input and their corresponding sustainability compliance via output and outcome variable requires further discussion, it can be concluded that rightly directed input variables can bring desired changes at the destinations to meet sustainability goals.

## 8. Significance of the study

As stated earlier, though the state of Kerala is different in social development compared to any other Indian state, its other development parameters are much closer to many eastern European countries (Harriss & Törnquist, 2015). In many ways, the state has better or more or less equal social development credentials with central and eastern European countries (Orford, 2008). Especially its democratic consciousness and well-organized social infrastructure often act as a model for other states of India and many other developing nations (Karlsson, 2018).

Similarly, the development process and practices, especially grass root level development and resource management followed by the state, can be a model for many eastern European nations to garner a more prudent resource management style in tourism. As a growing economy segment, tourism found prominent status in many central and east European nations; the inclusive strategy and community-centered development framework presented in the study is significant in the contemporary tourism development discourses of many such emerging economies. The grassroots level resource appropriation strategies, democratic practices in resource management through locally initiated institutions can be a catalyst in tourism development. The study indicates that these institutions are capable of adopting sustainability practices and yield benefits. These linkages are more relevant as the local community is often construed as an object of tourism rather than a subject of tourism development. This study is more appropriate for developing countries that have



strong democratic values in resource management and strive for community-centered development through local-level institutions.

Further, understanding community-level resource appropriation strategies can support a more democratic form of development agenda for nations across the globe. As Hes (2017), has observed community intervention is essential for attaining the SDGs, more importantly, SDG 5.5- Community participation and gender equity. Community-level intervention in tourism through local level institutions can further influence Goal 1 (End poverty in all its forms everywhere), Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all), Goal 12 (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns), and the sustainable consumption and conservation of natural resources (Goal, 14 & Goal, 15), either directly or indirectly.

## 9. Conclusion

In a nutshell, it has been noticed that SHG was able to reach various sectors of tourism, both functional as well as sectoral. Such intervention facilitates the community, especially the needy ones, to involve in various income-generating activities, thus giving impetus to the local economic development. These interventions enhanced commitments among local people in protecting the destination resources and valuing their contribution to the overall tourism development of the area. Their interventions into the developmental process of Kerala have helped to link the tourism activity with a pro-poor development agenda (as the majority of the SHG members are from poor and marginalized sections of the society) for inclusive growth, particularly in the context of national priorities and global development agenda like SDGs which strives for poverty reduction and environmental sustainability as the first and seventh goal respectively. The role of SHGs thus ushers the benefits of community development by promoting a pro-poor approach in tourism while attaining various sustainability dimensions.

The study's major limitation is the period-based subjective evaluation framework, which may not be appropriate for all contexts. The evaluation tool used, i.e., Input-output and outcome model looks for a holistic understanding of the topic under discussion. Other identified issues confronted while approaching and finalizing this study include the scarcely sufficient availability of related documents; as a result, most of the observation was identified and examined through direct personal interaction. The study framework was based on periodic changes or transformations that happened for the last fifteen years in the destination areas of Kerala.

Study direct future researchers to explore case-specific analysis to garner local specific nuances of SHG operations at different destinations. Further, the study extends the scope for sectoral assessment of SHGs in tourism in India and a detailed analysis of various dimensions of intervention for more objective results. Identified limitations were study tried to explore a holistic idea of intervention and its result and was less focussed. The possibility of a poor understanding of the perceived benefits of community intervention among stakeholders is quite common as most of the respondents were unable to comprehend their views as per the study needs. Such minimal understanding might have a bearing on subsequent explanations in the study.

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