

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TOURISM

### Abstract

View on tourism have changed over years. In tourism, the community involvement has substantial value which became the main attraction. Community involvement in tourism will help to bring sustainable development, economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. The tourism development highly depends upon the participation and support of community which ensures conservation of culture and environment. Community can provide food and accommodation, transportation, guiding services and local products to the tourists. The objectives of the study are to find out the perception of community towards involvement in tourism and to analyse the economic benefits and threats faced by the community from tourism. The primary data is collected from the local community residing in tourists spots in Thiruvananthapuram.

**Keywords:** Community involvement, economic benefits, threats faced by the tourists.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Views on tourism have changed over years. In tourism, the community involvement has substantial value which became the main attraction. According to Aref et al (2010), a community refers to a group of individuals living or working within the same geographical area with some shared culture or common interest. This geographical definition of community essentials to understand how community development is linked. Community involvement in tourism means the active involvement of an individual or group of individuals who advance in tourism related activities from decision making to conducting tourism related activities with the perception that these are beneficial for those involved. Community involvement in tourism will help to bring sustainable development, economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits. The tourism development highly depends upon the participation and support of community which ensures conservation of culture and environment. But for this the desires and needs of the community must be fulfilled. The perception of the community towards tourism must be analysed. Several benefits are provided by tourism to the community. Tourism increases revenue, creates job opportunities, better infrastructure and develops a sense of cultural exchange between community and tourists. Since the community has a special interest in the area and a commitment to environmental quality, their involvement in tourism development ensures that they are an active participant in this. Community can provide food and accommodation, transportation, guiding services and local products to the tourists.

## II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of the study include:

- To analyse the perception of community regarding their involvement in tourism.
- To analyse the benefits and threats faced by the community from tourism.

## III. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant difference in the benefits from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.
- There is no significant difference in the threats from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is an attempt to study the community involvement in tourism in Thiruvananthapuram district. Both primary data and secondary data were used for the present study. Primary study is collected from the community who are fully involved or partially involved. A questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents. Along with the primary data, secondary data is also collected from different articles, journals, published and unpublished reports and websites.

**1. Sample for the Study:** The population constitutes the community who are involved tourism related activities in different tourist spots in Thiruvananthapuram district. The researcher has used convenience sampling for selecting the samples for the study. The

number of samples selected for the study is 60. The criteria extend of involvement is selected on the basis of judgement.

- 2. Tools for Analysis:** The primary data collected from the community were tabulated analyzed and interpreted using the statistical package SPSS. The tools used were Percentage, MaanWhitney U test and Multiple response test.

## V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Michael & et al (2013) in their study the role of local communities in tourism development: grassroots perspective from Tanzania analysed both quantitative and qualitative data to find the perspectives of local community. The study pointed out that the local communities were interested to participate when tourism policies were being made which would help the policy makers to formulate a policy that fulfils stakeholders needs. The local community were of the opinion that that they should give a proper place in the developmental issues which would protect their interests.

Mohd Hafiz & et al (2013) in their study local community attitude and support towards development in Tioman Island, Malaysia studied the future attitude towards tourism development. The study pointed out that local community support was important for a successful tourism industry. The community involvement was very essential in developing and implementing different initiatives. The study stated that residents showed a positive perception towards economic and social impact of tourism but in the case of environmental impact, they showed a negative perception.

Dolmoecotourism (2018) stated in the report local community involvement in tourism development that the participation of local community in tourism helps to improve culture, knowledge and tradition. This affirms the sustainability, environmental conservation and community welfare. Community should be encouraged to involve indecision making and gave representation. The main objective of community participation is to bring communication among the community which brings sustainable development and growth.

Yasmine (2019) in the study the importance of tourism on economies and businesses stated that tourism is important for the success of many nations and it has provided various advantages to host communities. Tourists were very interested to experience the community's culture, tradition. This would become more profitable to community businesses. The authorities are aiming to generate more revenue from tourism. For these advanced facilities were necessary. This leads to development of infrastructure. Tourism bring cultural diversity and enrichment of culture in the host community.

## VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

- 1. Extend of Involvement:** The involved of community in tourism is divided into two categories namely community who are fully involved and community who are partially involved.

**Table 1: Extend of involvement**

Extend of involvement	No	Percent
Fully involved	31	51.7
Partially involved	29	48.3
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data

The table shows that 51.7 percent of the community were fully involved in the tourism related activities and 48.3 were partially involved.

2. **Services on which Community are Involved:** Development in tourism generate demand for various services. New business will be started or existing business will expand their operations. From food and accommodation, entertainment, health service, transportation to guiding services, tourism helps to develop businesses that community can run.

**Table 2: Services on which community are involved**

Services	No	Percent
Food and accommodation	13	21.7
Transportation	8	13.3
Handicraft business	6	10
Local products business	12	20
Guiding services	12	21.7
Financial services	6	8.3
Ayurveda centres	3	5

Source: Primary data

The above table shows that out of the total respondents, majority of them were involved in the business of food and accommodation and guiding services (21.7 percent respectively) followed by business of local products. Only 5 percent of the community was involved in running Ayurveda centres.

3. **Perception of Community regarding their Role in Tourism:** The extend of involvement in various tourism activities depends upon what they are expecting from the same. The different statements which show the community perception were given to community asked them whether they agreed or not to each statement.

**Table 3: Perception of community regarding their role in tourism**

Statements	Mean	Standard deviation
Community should be consulted when tourism policies related to the community are made.	1.7667	0.42652
Community should be provided with financial support to start business in tourist spots	1.0833	0.27872
Community should be considered as the main entrepreneurs in that particular area.	1.1667	0.37582

Community should be given job at all levels of tourism	1.4833	0.50394
Community should be provided with sufficient knowledge regarding the tourist activities.	1.6500	0.48099
Tourist should be informed of the facilities offered by the community.	1.3167	0.46910

Source: Primary data

\*Lowest mean score, the stronger is the agreement.

The mean scores for these variables are above 1, showing support to these statements. The community has showed strongest support to the statement – community should provide financial support. Finance is considered as the main hindrance to involve in tourism. If they get loans or other financial assistance, they can start new ventures. Secondly, they are strongly agreed to the statement- community should be considered as the main entrepreneurs in their tourism area. Thereby they can generate more employment which in turn increases the level of income.

4. **Benefits received and Threats faced by Community from Tourism:** The benefits received and threats faced by the community from tourism will influence their involvement.
5. **Benefits from Tourism:** The main aim of encouraging tourism is to generate more employment opportunities, increase income level of people, create an atmosphere that give respect to other culture, improving their own culture and improvements in tourism can provide better infrastructure to the community.

**Table 4: Benefits received by the community from tourism**

Benefits	Responses		Percent of cases
	No	Percent	
Better quality of life	34	18.4	58.6
More employment opportunities	35	18.9	60.3
Improvement in culture	30	16.2	51.7
More income generation	36	19.5	62.1
Respect for different culture	16	8.6	27.6
Better infrastructure	34	18.4	58.6
Total	185	100	319.0

Source: Primary data

The above table represents the benefits derived by the community from tourism. Majority of the community considered more income generation (19.5 percent) as the main benefit out of which 62.1 percent was completely agreeing only to this benefit. Usually, tourist spent more money to buy the products or for availing services. This would increase the revenue of the community. Generating more employment opportunities were also considered as a benefit (18.9 percent). When tourism is developing, the new businesses will emerge and the existing units would try to expand their units. The jobs are not only in tourism but also in health, agriculture, transportation and communication sectors. Only 8.6 percent considered respect for different culture as a benefit from tourism.

- 6. Threats Faced from Tourism:** Although tourism provides positive impacts on community, worries are there about the adverse impacts on tourism which include impact on economy, overcrowding, control by outsiders, change in culture and leakage in revenue.

**Table 5: Threats faced by the community from tourism**

Threats	Mean Score	Rank
Impact on economy	1.7167	1
Overcrowding	2.1500	2
Control by outsiders	3.9500	4
Change in culture	3.0667	3
Leakage in revenue	4.3000	5

Source: Primary data

The analysis shows that adverse impact on economy as the main threat from tourism. So, the first rank was allotted to this, followed by overcrowding and change in culture. When more tourists came to a particular area, more resources were needed. There might be increase in pollution, loss of habitat and this would affect the ecological balance. Overcrowding in a less developed infrastructure environment might disturb the life of community and there occurs a chance to adopt the culture of tourists from different places. Leakage in revenue was allotted the fifth rank.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference in the benefits from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

For analysing whether there is significant difference in the benefits from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved, Mann Whitney test was used.

**Table 6: Difference in benefits on the basis of extend of involvement**

Extend of involvement	Mean ranks
Fully involved	33.05
Partially involved	27.78

Source: Primary data

**Table 6: Test statistics showing difference in benefits on the basis of extend of involvement**

Mann Whitney U test	370.500
Z	-1.400
Sig.	0.162

Source: Primary data

From the analysis, it was found that mean rank for community fully involved is 33.05 and community partially involved is 27.78. The result of test shows that Z value is -1.400 and significance level is 0.162 which is greater than 0.05.

As the significance level is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there exists no significant difference in the benefits from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the threats from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

For analysing whether there is significant difference in the threats from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved, Mann Whitney test was used.

**Table 7: Difference in threats faced on the basis of extend of involvement**

Extend of involvement	Mean ranks
Fully involved	30.05
Partially involved	30.98

Source: Primary data

**Table 6: Test statistics showing difference in threats faced on the basis of extend of involvement**

Mann Whitney U test	435.500
Z	-0.240
Sig.	0.811

Source: Primary data

From the analysis, it was found that mean rank for community fully involved is 30.05 and community partially involved is 30.98. The result of test shows that Z value is -0.240 and significance level is 0.811 which is greater than 0.05.

As the significance level is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted and there exists no significant difference in the threats from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

## VII. FINDINGS

1. Majority of the community were fully involved in tourism activities.
2. Food and accommodation and guiding services were the main areas in which community more involved.
3. The community were of the opinion that they should get financial assistance from the authorities to start ventures.
4. Generation of more employment opportunities was the most considered benefit from the tourism by the community.
5. Adverse impact created by tourism on economy was the main threat agreed by the community.
6. There is no significant difference in the benefits from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.
7. There is no significant difference in the threats from tourism between community who are fully and partially involved.

## VIII. SUGGESTIONS

1. Lack of sufficient funds is a main problem for involvement in tourism. The concerned authorities must provide finance to the needy community on the basis of skills they acquired.
2. Organise programs to develop language skills among the community.
3. Efforts must be taken to connect the tourists and the community and inform them about the services provided by the community. So, there will be no leakage in revenue.
4. Provide proper guidelines to community regarding how to treat tourists.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Most of the community were engaged in providing food and accommodation and guiding services. Many of them need financial support to be involved more in tourism activities. Employment generation is considered as the main benefit and adverse impact on economy is considered as the main threat from tourism.

## REFERENCE

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