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Determinants for success of community-based rural tourism: Review of related literatures

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to establish a concept of the role of Community-based Rural Tourism (CBRT) in community development and the significance of Community Participation in order to bring a change in community socioeconomic status through active involvement in community-based rural tourism. The paper pointed out several factors which determine the meaningful and active participation of community members in Community-based rural tourism based on extensive review of related literature. Moreover, the paper articulated the factors which point out the need for collaboration with stakeholders and the importance of tourist satisfaction in ensuring long term benefits through community-based rural tourism. The present paper will be quite helpful in establishing the concept of interdependence between CBRT and community participation, CBRT and tourist satisfaction, CBRT and environment conservation, CBRT and stakeholder collaboration, and the concept of using CBRT as an instrument for community development.

Keywords— Community-Based Rural Tourism (CBRT), Community Participation (CP), Stakeholders' collaboration, Community satisfaction, Tourist satisfaction

1. INTRODUCTION

Community-based rural tourism can be defined as an approach of tourism development initiative that takes place in rural settings in which community participation is envisaged as the focal point in the process of community development along with the active involvement of all stakeholders belonging to both public and private sectors. The involvement of local people is helpful not only in the purpose of making the tourism industry a sustainable one but most importantly in preparing the local people themselves to bring a change in their socio-economic status both at individual and community level by imparting them with the necessary skill for involvement in CBRT as planners, managers, employees, entrepreneurs, tourist guides, craftsmen, etc. CP is also important on the matter of residents' hospitality towards tourists. However, there are several factors which contribute towards successful application of community approach in tourism development in which the degree of being allowed to participate, the outcome of participation and the level of knowledge to participate are the main factors. Apart from CP, collaboration among stakeholders, NGOs and concerned government departments to work together for up bring community-based tourism especially at the beginning of the process are crucial towards achieving the objectives of sustainable CBRT. The capacity to ensure tourist satisfaction is another eminent criterion in ensuring long term benefits from CBRT and hence its sustainability.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of linking community-based tourism with community development has initially been found in the work of Murphy (1985). Community participation in rural tourism plays a key role in rural tourism development because local inhabitants are the ones who possess the distinctive assets required for picking up a place as a potential tourist destination. The SWOT analysis regarding the role of community participation in CBRT is discussed below:

Strength: The contribution of local communities in the form of accommodation, information, catering, transport facilities and service is recognised as a focal point in rural tourism agenda (Aref et al, 2010; Muganda et al, 2013). All resources which can be utilised as products of rural tourism belong to local communities including the people themselves and their culture, the natural environment and all attractive attributes therein (Murphy, 1995). Hence community participation serves as a potential tool of motivation for local people to contribute significantly in transforming a destination for a tourist attraction (Felstead, 2000).

Weakness: Community participatory approach is time-consuming and requires incorporation of other parameters like education, sufficient financial assistance, business expertise and high transaction and maintenance cost (Jamal and Getz, 1994; Addison, 1995; Okazaki, 2008).

Opportunity: Community participation in tourism development provides an opportunity for local people to procure greater and more balanced profit from the process of development (Tosun, 2000; Wei et al, 2012). It provides an opportunity for sharing and transformation of knowledge in the process of enhancing community development (Okazaki, 2008). Community participation also helps in reducing tourism negative impacts (Jamal and Getz, 1995; Okazaki, 2008). Non-participation consequently leads to unfavourable behaviour of locales against tourists in form of hostility and resentment. Community participatory approach enhances the feasibility and longevity of projects as it provides an opportunity for linking of tourism plans with the socio-economic development of the host community (Okazaki, 2008).

Threat: When an entire community is involved in the process, there arise a conflict of ideas and interests (Addison, 1996). Other constraints due to community participation is and paternalism, racism and clientelism (Tosun, 2000; Dogra and Gupta, 2012)

Based on the SWOT analysis of the role played by community participation in rural tourism, it can now be stated that community participatory approach has both positive and negative impact on tourism development. However, it is quite pertinent that the involvement of local communities proves to be more significant in tourism development agenda rather than non-participation. Moreover, the major impacts of tourism are the host communities who live in tourist destination areas (Lea, 1988) and hence local people must have maximum involvement in the process so that they can maximise the socio-economic benefits of tourism for their community (Tosun, 1999). Therefore, it is important that tourism operators should find ways to overcome the negative impact factors and to enhance the positive ones with regards to community participation and in doing so it is necessary that the type and level of community participation must be assessed and dealt with in a greater depth so that evaluation process can be carried on in order to identify the success or failure of using community participatory approach in tourism and also to articulate the fact of whether or not community participatory approach has been implemented practically in the field.

Arnstein's typology of participation has been used extensively in analysing the type and level of community participation in tourism. Arnstein's typology of participation was categorised into three levels, i.e. non-participation, tokenism and citizen power and the types of participation were shown in each level which was illustrated in the form of a ladder with eight rungs, each rung representing the type of community participation. The bottom rungs of the ladder are *manipulative* and *therapy*. These two rungs represent a zero level of participation and community participation has been contrived and put on paper by power holders in order to gain greater control of local assets. Arnstein's non-participation is in concurrence with Paulo Freire's Culture of Silence theory in which power-holders silence people through false generosity and condition them to learn and accept values and norms and gain control over them for the sake of improving their own vested interests (Freire, 1973). Zhang (2010) defined Arnstein's manipulative and therapeutic type of participation as 'coercive community participation'. Rung 3 and 4 represent *informing* and *consultation* in which the local people are allowed to express their views and concerns, however, there is no status quo that their views should compulsorily be incorporated in tourism planning. Rung 5 represents *placation* which is a higher level of tokenism of community participation. Placation refers to the level and type of involvement characterised by the existence of a status quo that allow people to advise but under certain circumstances, their voice can still be ignored by the power holders. Rung 6 represents a *partnership* in which people are vested with the power to negotiate with the power holders and granted with the power to get engaged in planning and decision making. The topmost rungs, i.e. 7 and 8 represent *delegated power* and *citizen control* respectively. Delegated power and citizen control allow local communities to gain full power over planning and management, policy making and benefit sharing. Such types and levels of participation induce a spontaneous or 'bottom-up' process of community participation in tourism development (Zhang, 2010).

Davidson (1998) devised a model to explain the degree of community participation. Davidson's model of community participation was presented in the form of a wheel comprising of four sequential modules, each module having three successive sub-modules, each indicating a positive change in community participation as the wheel rolls in a forward direction. The four modules in a wheel assumed to be moving in a forward direction are information->consultation->participation->empowerment. The 'information' module consists of three slightly different sub-modules viz. minimal communication->limited information->good quality information. Minimal communication indicates a non-participation in which the community is neither consulted nor informed in the decision-making process except when legally required. Limited information indicates a situation in which the target community people are informed but do not have the right to choose the kind of information they want. Good quality information indicates a circumstance in which the information provided is in accordance with the need of the community. The 'consultation' module is comprised of limited consultation->customer care->genuine consultation in a forward rolling wheel. Limited consultation indicates a circumstance in which information is provided to the community but in a way in which there is no responsibility on whether the community responds or not. Customer care indicates the existence of a customer-oriented service. Genuine consultation indicates a situation in which a concerned community is allowed to get involved actively in discussing issues prior to implementation of a project or programme. The 'participation' module consists of effective advisory body->partnership->limited decentralized decision-making. The effective advisory body represents a kind of community participation in which a concerned community is invited to draw up proposals for planning and implementation. Partnership indicates a more community-oriented approach in which problem-solving is undertaken in partnership with the concerned community. Limited decentralized decision-making indicates a greater community participatory approach in which the concerned community is allowed to make their own decisions on some issues. The 'empowerment' module is comprised of three successive modules viz. delegated control->independent control->entrusted control. Delegated control indicates community delegation with limited decision-making powers over a particular area or project. Independent control indicates a greater level of community participation in which entire service is done by the host community under the look out of the controlling council or agency. Entrusted control indicates the most community-oriented participatory approach in which overall decision-making power is solely transferred to the concerned community.

Okazaki (2008) integrated four principal theories of the ladder of participation (Arnstein, 1969), power redistribution (Rocha, 1997), collaboration process and social capital to explain the concept of community participation in community-based tourism. The researcher also highlighted the significance of each of these four variables and their relationship in determining the success of community-based tourism. Arnstein's ladder of participation and power redistribution were used to explain the level and type of community participation and community empowerment in the process of participation itself. Collaboration process was used to explain the significant requirement of partnership and collaboration in tourism on account of the fact that tourism is dependent on many external factors. Social capital was used to cover all norms and networks which enable people to act collectively and effectively. The researcher devised his model by using a two dimensional graph which placed the collaboration processes and bridging social capital on the horizontal axis, and Arnstein's participation ladder, power redistribution and bonding and linking social capital on the vertical axis and the relationship of the four variables were explained by the researcher by drawing an upward sloping curve on the basis of the five following propositions that underpin the model: (1) when community participation is boosted, power redistribution gets facilitated; (2) if the collaboration process is not stimulated, neither community participation nor power redistribution occur; (3) if neither community participation nor power redistribution progresses, collaboration is not facilitated; (4) inequities in power weakens collaboration; and (5) social capital functions as facilitator to enhance community participation, power redistribution and collaboration of stakeholders to create a synergy within the community as well as between the community and the stakeholders in order to ensure sustainability in community based tourism.

The theories mentioned were quite useful to articulate the level and kind of participation of local communities in community-based tourism as well as in understanding the utility of community participation, a partnership among the community, public and private sectors in pursuing the objectives of community-based rural tourism. It is understood from the above theories that citizen control over management, a proposal for planning and benefit sharing, a partnership with concerned stakeholders were projected as the main driving forces for achieving the goals of community-based tourism. However, the role of natural environment and the connection between local culture and environment, local culture and rural tourism, environment and rural tourism, and tourists who are the major actors in tourism development arena have not been incorporated in the theories. Therefore, in order to gain a holistic approach in building the concept of sustainability of community-based rural tourism, it is necessary to bring forth all these factors into the discourse.

People in rural areas, especially when it comes to indigenous tribal groups, have a deep connection with the natural environment. They depend on the natural resources like land resources, forest and water resources for meeting their needs for livelihood (Slater and Twyman, 2003; Lee and Neves, 2009). The connection between man and nature is manifested even in their rituals and auspicious festive dances (Mawrie, 2001). Place (and landscape) can provide a medium for community values and beliefs that are celebrated in community cultural events (Derrett, 2003). In turn, the periodical festive dances and community cultural events underpin the scope of cultural tourism and cultural tourism is one among the potential approaches of rural tourism (Blesic and Pivac, 2014; Matei, 2015). Hence, one must understand that any endeavour to undermine the landscape and all other resources therein, is also an act of undermining the source of cultural values and beliefs, and any endeavour to refashion local culture and tradition for capitalistic vested interests are not in favour of the interests of local people and hence demotivate them to participate in the tourism development process. Spontaneous participation of community without a hierarchical domination in tourism planning, management and decision making (or in any other approaches towards sustainable community development) is crucial towards ensuring sustainability of tourism because conflicts in society consequently create a dilemma where we can hardly address the developmental process and environmental issues as Bookchin (1921) stated that the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human. An act of *complementarity* by understanding the biological evolutionary history of human beings itself is required to attain sustainability in the real sense. In ethics of *complementarity*, each human being would complement other human beings and nonhuman forms with his/her own capacities to produce a richer, creative, and developmental whole-not as a "dominant" species but as a supportive one. The concept of *complementarity* as suggested by Bookchin (1921) is important not only from the point of view to end up the cultural hierarchical structure that led to the classification of society between the rich and the poor, the 'haves' and the 'have not', the power and the powerless and so on but also to change our attitude towards the natural world and to feel that we are all part of nature, of the natural evolutionary process.

Most researchers used the Tripple Bottom Line approach coined by Elkington in the early 1990s as the basic concept of researches pertaining to sustainability (Faux, 2010, Jackson et al, 2011; Lederwasch and Mukhibir, 2013; Alhaddi, 2015). The TBL construct advocated that sustainability in rural tourism is a matter of equal concern for the natural environment as well as on ensuring socio-cultural and economic empowerment to the host community (Flint, 2013). Community-based rural tourism takes place at the cost of nature as Pigram (2001) stated that tourism is primarily a resource-based activity, and tourism and nature conservation are interdependent. Therefore, tourism should adopt measures for environmental protection and nature conservation, or even substantial enhancement of natural areas so as to increase visitors' satisfaction. Puiu et al (1974) pointed out that Tourism is one of the main beneficiaries of geographic landscapes which mainly represent the "raw material" in the development of tourism activities. The feature of landscape is one such potential factor for determining the potentiality of a place for setting up tourism ventures as attractive landscapes influence the destination preference of tourists and the topography of landscapes also determine the kind of tourist activities and the spatial concentration of infrastructure as well as the architectural and functional adaptation according to the principle of harmonious integration (Puiu et al, 1974). The TBL approach with regards to the socio-cultural aspect of ensuring sustainability in CBRT projects emphasises on motivation for community participation by creating tourism related platforms to raise local culture to the world in order to raise a sense of cultural dignity, to increase people's interpersonal skills, to make them feel a sense of community spirit, to foster cultural exchange, to increase their civic pride and collective self-image (CREST, 2012; Zaei and Zaei, 2013). The economic aspect of the TBL approach received the most attention in the literature concerning CBRT. People are motivated to participate in CBRT if they can foresee the contribution of CBRT towards community socio-economic development by creating employment (Tosun, 2002; Ashe, 2005), helping small businesses (Davis et

al, 1988) and if it holds promises to bring capital investment opportunities to the community (Settina and Richmond, 1978). In the concept of Maslow (1943), we must understand that community members are subjected to spontaneous participation if they know that the outcome of their participation can suffice their basic needs for food and shelter, then their psychological needs for security and safety, intimate relationship among community members, prestige and feeling of accomplishment and finally, self-actualization. Hence the role of education in the form of awareness on the prospective role of CBRT in community upliftment and also in the form of the capacity building to impart the people with the necessary skill for participation is a pre-condition in CBRT development Giampiccoli and Mtapuri (2017).

The role of tourists in the CBRT framework received the least of attention in tourism researches. However, tourists play the most important part of tourism development, for without tourists there can be no tourism (Breugel, 2013). Muller (1994) advocated tourist satisfaction as one of the basic determinants for achieving the success of tourism. Bhattacharya (2004) proposed two interconnected components for tourist satisfaction i.e. tourist recreational demand and supply of tourism products. The sunlust and wonderlust theory (1970) advocated the fact that people want to visit a particular place because they are attracted to that place because of the existence of something which does not exist in their place of origin which also implies that the place they choose for visit can provide possesses specific products that tourists are curious to explore and experience more about them. The investment that tourism operators or host communities make for tourism development is paid off by the investment that tourists make for their visit and by way of purchasing the products and services. According to Oliver (1996), consumer satisfaction (including tourist satisfaction) is an outcome of discrepancy between pre-purchase expectation and perceived performance of products and service. Discrepancy leads to disconfirmation which can either be positive or negative. If a product or service outperforms the customer's original expectations, the disconfirmation is positive leading to satisfaction. On the other hand, if a product or service underperforms original expectations, negative disconfirmation occurs and the customer is left unsatisfied (Wang and Davidson, 2010).

The Outcome: On integrating the concept of significance of community participation in CBRT development, factors determining level and type of community participation, the participation of stakeholders in CBRT through collaboration and partnership, the significance of environmental conservation and promotion in the CBRT process, and the contribution of tourists in CBRT and the concept of tourist motivation to visit and revisit based on Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969), Davidson's wheel of participation (1998), Okazaki's power redistribution, collaboration and social capital (2008), Bookchin's complementarity concept (1921), Elkington's Tripple Bottom Line approach (1997), the sunlust and wanderlust concept of tourists' desire to visit (1979), and Oliver's expectation disconfirmation theory (1996) and other literary works pertaining to CBRT by different authors and researchers, it can clearly be understood that success of CBRT is determined by two major factors viz. participation-community, stakeholders and tourists, and maintenance of natural environment where tourism takes place. Successful and spontaneous community participation in CBRT for their own socio-economic development is dependent on certain factors including level and kind of participation empowered to the community, awareness and capacity building, and a sense of community satisfaction. Community satisfaction requires the assurance of promoting cultural beliefs, customs and tradition, social acceptance, cultural exchange, etc. Active participation of stakeholders requires assurance of sharing benefit and proper collaboration process. Continuous participation of tourists in CBRT in the form of visit, revisit and motivation for others to visit the place, and also in the form of purchasing of products and services is dependent on ensuring tourist satisfaction from the supply side to meet their recreational demand and hence tourist satisfaction should be a prime concern in CBRT initiatives in order that the role that they play for ensuring sustainability in CBRT can be uplifted for a long term. Since the sustainability of CBRT also depends on the natural environment which is the sole provider of assets and products of CBRT, it is important for tourism planners and managers to incorporate environment (or landscape) assessment, planning and proper monitoring in the strategy of tourism planning by adopting strong measures for its conservation and promotion to enhance the beauty of nature and the resources therein.

3. CONCLUSION

CBRT is asserted by many authors and scholars as a viable alternative source of income for rural community development and the active involvement of all citizens, rich and poor, in CBRT for bringing a change in their own community socio-economic situation is an integral factor in order to attain the goal of community development as well as to ensure sustainability in the process of CBRT development process. There are other factors of great concerns apart from community participation and satisfaction, which are quite useful in determining the success of CBRT and its contribution towards community development and these factors are comprised of partnership or collaboration with potential stakeholders, tourists' participation and sense of satisfaction upon their visit, products and service. Environmental conservation and enrichment is another crucial factor in the process of CBRT as CBRT takes place in a rural setting where most of the attractive attributes are nature-based and natural environment plays a major role in determining the potentiality of a place for setting up of tourism ventures. Hence, adoption of principles and measures to ensure community satisfaction, tourist satisfaction, proper stakeholder collaboration process and environmental conservation and promotion in the entire gamut of tourism development planning form the basis for sustainability of CBRT initiatives.

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