
PERCEPTION OF THE COMMUNITY TOWARDS COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS IN YAMUNA VALLEY OF GARHWAL HIMALAYAS OF UTTARAKHAND

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Abstract:

The study analyses the perception of community towards community-based tourism development impacts in Yamuna valley of Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand. An empirical study of the 15 villages in the geographical area of the Yamuna valley was done. This study determined the local community's perception of itself, its assessment of tourism in the area and of its potential improvement. The results of the analyzing data showed that community members have a positive attitude towards the development of community-based tourism in the region.

Introduction:

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) in developing nations is considered a tool for development; it is the important source of economic and socio-cultural enhancement of the people of rural areas. As the name suggests this special interest tourism involves the local community of a destination in the tourism development process (TDP). Various developing nations considered it as a tool for development in rural areas because it generates opportunities for jobs and keeps rural communities from moving from their native place to other destinations just for seeking jobs (Bokor, 2001). CBT is more functional in the rural

and/or peripheral regions because they have plenty of resources that can be promoted and sold as a tourism product such as natural environment, local culture, traditional agricultural practices, local cuisines, and local handicrafts etc. Nowadays, the community also invests a major part of their resources in tourism believing that, it will bring enormous economic and social benefits to their community.

Yamuna valley has a great variety and wealth of natural and cultural attractions. At this point, this valley is still not recognized at national the level as a tourist attraction. Furthermore, the residents of this valley have migrated to developed cities. The main reasons for visiting the villages are to visit friends and relatives (VFR). During fieldwork carried out in this area, it was found that there were very few small hotels and restaurants. It is worth noting the importance of local communities in the tourism industry because the majority of restaurants are run by these local communities. As far as the infrastructure in the area is concerned, urban areas have drinking water and electricity, whereas the supply of these two vital elements is not guaranteed in rural areas. It must be also noted that there is a lack of improved treatment of waste and refuse, poor coordination of the financial system, serious deficiencies in medical care and public transport despite this there were no serious attempts made by the Government to improve them.

Objectives:

To analyze the perception of community towards community-based tourism development on their economy, socio-cultural and environment in terms of positive and negative impacts.

Literature Review:

For tourism development, various organizations which are directly or indirectly related the tourism, promote "people" in the "community" as the "centre" or heart. The "community-based tourism" concept arises from these forces. For instance, the UNESCO program entitled "Integrated Community Development and Cultural Heritage Site Preservation in Asia and the Pacific" or LEAP (UNESCO, 2000) is a detailed program illustrating this emphasis. Pearce and Moscardo (1999) also accentuate the concept of "tourism community relationship" and repeatedly cite it in their research planning documents by giving precedence status in the global, national, and local tourism research agendas. Due to imminent changes in tourism, Ritchie's (1993) foretell the growth of community-tourism

perspectives. For future tourism, he specifically and increasingly focuses on the importance of resident-responsive tourism, global lifestyles, and demographic shifts. Dann (1999) highlighted the importance of the tourism community relationships as one of the nineteen tourism issues that emerged from the brainstorming of an expert panel in the area. They predicted the need for greater resident responsive tourism, which is the more democratic participation in tourism decision making by grass-root members of a destination society (Dann, 1999). Several factors create impediments in the study and analysis of tourism and community. Both Jamal and Getz (1995) and Kneafsey (2001) mentioned that community-driven tourism planning may be an unachievable idea because of the diverse community attitudes toward tourism development and growth raise. Walker, Mitchell and Wismer (2001) argued that group power, decision making, and recognizing the diversity within and among social groups at the local level are weak due to true involvement. Kneafsey (2001) noted that the "culture and economy approach is not applied by any actor, but it is a combined effort of various players who operates at different types of spatial scales with sometimes conflicting agendas. Further, some evidence also proves that some sectors of the local population are not predominantly interested in alternative development. Also, up to a very large extent, a primarily market-driven local development is decided by an individual private entrepreneur in the community (Douglas, 1989). Furthermore, Dann (1999) also noted that with the international social aspect of tourism, it becomes paraphernalia of external constraints that can engulf both tourist choice and the aspiration of destination communities. Thus, from the experiences of the above-mentioned author's tourism may not always be the most appropriate sort of investment for regions of the developing world. As suggested above, various questions have been raised related to the economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and political aspects which serve tourist choices and destination communities, and for the development of the world's poorer nation's tourism can be included as a strategy (Son, Pigram, and Rugendyke, 1999).

Research Methodology

To carry out this research, an empirical study of the 15 villages in the geographical area of the Yamuna valley was done. This study determined the local community's perception of itself, its assessment of tourism in the area and of its potential improvement. The subjects of the study were the residents in the area and a sample design was carried out by means of convenient sampling and the sample size of the study was 250 respondents. The instrument of research was structured and closed questionnaires were made up of three sections: Section A. Socio-demographic profile of the survey group. Section B. Analysis of the community's perception of itself, regarding the current situation of tourism and its potential development. Section C. Evaluation of tourist resources and infrastructure in the area. The data were analyzed through a descriptive statistics.

Result and findings:

1. Positive economic impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT improves development and infrastructure in the village	31	12.4	33	13.2	12	4.6	95	38	79	31.8	3.64	Agree
CBT can increase employment opportunities	20	8.0	7	2.8	20	7.8	91	36.4	112	45	4.07	Very agree
CBT can contribute to income and standard of living	20	8.0	11	4.4	22	8.8	103	41.4	93	37.4	3.96	Agree

Table 1 Source: Field Survey

The above table 1 provides the distribution of the perception of respondents regarding the positive economic impacts in terms of improvement and development of infrastructure, employment opportunities and increase income and standard of living. In this regard, the respondents from the sampled villages have revealed their agreement to the given statements. The respondents have agreed with the factors having positive economic impacts in the Yamuna valley. It has been noted that these positive economic factors have affected the development of community-based tourism in the region.

2. Positive socio-cultural impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT can improve quality of life	14	5.6	10	4.0	26	10.4	105	42.2	95	37.8	4.03	Agree
CBT can increase no. of recreational facilities and entertainment centers	13	5.2	10	4.0	26	10.4	116	46.4	85	33.8	3.99	Agree
CBT can improve the image of different communities and cultures	15	6.2	10	4.0	19	7.8	119	42.2	80	32.2	3.80	Agree
CBT can promote variety of cultural activities	23	9.2	19	7.6	22	9.0	105	42.0	80	32.2	3.80	Agree
CBT can improve quality of safety measures	10	4.2	12	4.8	20	7.8	114	45.6	94	37.6	4.08	Agree

Table 2 Source: Field Survey

Table 2 depicts the perceptions of respondents regarding the positive socio-cultural impact in stipulations of quality of life, recreational facilities and entertainment centers, images of communities and cultures, cultural activities and safety measures. Respondent from sampled villages revealed the agreement with all the factors of positive socio-cultural impact. Table also interprets that community-based tourism will make positive effects on the socio-cultural aspects and the community is aware of the positive effects of community-based tourism development.

3. Perception regarding positive environmental impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT can preserve environment and improve the appearance of the village	5	2.0	3	1.0	14	5.4	116	46.4	113	43.2	4.32	Agree
CBT can improve living utilities infrastructure (water, electricity, phone, waste management)	9	3.6	5	2.0	13	5.4	105	41.8	118	47.7	4.2	Very Agree
CBT can improve public facilities	8	3.0	5	2.2	10	4.0	117	46.8	110	44.0	4.26	Agree

Table 3 Source: Field Survey

Table 3 shows the perception of respondents in view of several factors of positive environmental impact of community-based tourism i.e., preserve environment and improves the appearance of the village, improve living utilities and improves public facilities. In this regard, most of the respondents show their agreement for the statement that development of community-based tourism will preserve environment and improve the various public facilities in their region. On the other hand, respondents are very agreed with the positive factors i.e., living utilities facilities will improve through community-based tourism development.

4. Perception regarding negative economic impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT can unfairly increase cost of land and taxes	35	13.8	101	40.4	91	36.6	16	6.4	7	2.8	2.44	Disagree
CBT can increase cost of living	31	12.6	108	43.0	86	34.4	16	5.6	11	4.4	2.46	Disagree
CBT can increase price of goods and services	38	15.2	87	34.6	92	37.0	27	10.8	6	2.4	2.51	Uncertain

Table 4 Source: Field Survey

The table 4 presents the perception of community regarding negative economic impact of community-based tourism in the sampled villages. In this regard, respondents from the sampled villages show their disagreement with negative impact of community-based tourism in the several factors such as unfairly increase in cost of land and taxes, increase in cost of living. Besides, respondents are uncertain with the increase in price of goods and services. Table also reveals that Community denies the negative impacts of community-based tourism on their economy.

5. Perception regarding negativesocio-cultural impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT can increase accidents	70	28.2	113	45.4	42	16.8	20	8.2	4	1.4	2.09	Disagree
CBT can increase crime	81	32.4	123	49.2	20	7.8	17	6.8	4	3.8	2.00	Disagree
CBT can increase the exploitation of local natives	78	31.0	93	37.2	34	13.6	27	10.6	19	7.6	2.27	Disagree
CBT can increase alcoholism and prostitution etc.	92	36.8	114	45.6	23	9.2	15	5.8	6	2.6	1.92	Disagree
CBT can increase illegal games	83	33.4	97	38.6	38	15.2	16	6.6	15	6.2	2.14	Disagree

Table 5 Source: Field Survey

The above table 5 represents the perception of community regarding negative socio-cultural impact of community-based tourism in the region. In this regard, respondents from the sampled villages recorded their disagreement with all the statements regarding negative impacts of community-based tourism on the socio- cultural aspects of the villages, such as increase accidents, increase crimes, increment in exploitation of local natives, increase in alcoholism and prostitution and illegal games.

6. Perception regarding negative environmental impacts												
Statement	1 (VD)		2 (D)		3 (U)		4 (A)		5 (VA)		Mean	Interpre-tation
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
CBT can damagenatural environment and landscape	54	21.4	93	37.4	64	25.4	24	9.6	15	6.2	2.42	Disagree
CBT can destroy local ecosystems	50	20.2	97	38.6	65	25.8	27	10.8	12	4.6	2.41	Disagree
CBT can increase pollution	41	16.4	97	38.6	62	25.0	31	12.4	19	7.6	2.56	Disagree

Table 6 Source: Field Survey

Table 6 depicts the perception of community regarding negative environmental impact of community-based tourism in the region. For analyzing the perception of respondents in regards with the negative environmental impacts, several factors were used such as community-based tourism development, damages natural environment & landscape, destroy local ecosystem and increases pollution. In this regard, respondents from sampled villages recorded their disagreement with the negative impacts of community-based tourism on their natural environment.

Conclusion:

The results of the analyzing data showed that community members have a positive attitude towards the development of community-based tourism in the region. For example, their perception related to the economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts is significant and positive, the negative effects of the community-based tourism cause a lower societal inclination to participate in tourism development programs, though its positive impact results in increasing their support and reaching goals. With regard to the Yamuna valley, it seems that the benefits resulted from the community-based tourism has relatively been able to provide required encouragement to participate in tourism development programs. In this study, the impact of community-based tourism on the economic, socio-cultural and environmental factors are reckoned as the most important factors effective on Community based tourism development. Knowing how community-based tourism effects on society and supporting community's Cooperation have an important impact on reinforcing the strengths and improving the weakness of tourism planning.

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