



Community Based Tourism: Concepts and Perspectives

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ABSTRACT:-

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industry in the world. The tourism contributes to job creation, infrastructure development, revenue generation, regional and rural development. According to World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) estimates, the travel and tourism sector in 2019 contributed 10.3 percent of world GDP, a share which decreased to 5.3 percent in 2020 due to ongoing restrictions on mobility while as 2021 saw the share increasing to 6.1 percent. And in 2020 62 million jobs were lost representing a drop of 18.6 percent leaving just 271 million employed across the sector compared to 333 million in 2019. 18.2 million jobs were recovered in 2021, representing an increase of 6.7 percent year-on-year. The tourism sector exerts an immense pressure on the resources with some adverse effects on the environment. The world is now searching for an alternate ways of tourism which will be sustainable. Some alternate tourism types to mass tourism are eco-tourism, rural tourism, community based tourism, etc. The present paper is an effort to give conceptual idea of the community based tourism and discuss some of its perspectives. Thepros and cons of community based tourism are evaluated to some extent.

Keywords :- Tourism, community, community based tourism, sustainable development.

1. Introduction:-

The world as a whole wants development in every sense but the challenge is to sustain this development. The sustainable development, as defined by the Brundtland Commission, is that which meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs. So, the resources which are at our disposal today must be preserved for the future generation in the way they were preserved for us by our ancestors. We should use these resources judiciously in order to have a less pressure on them. One of the main natural resource is our environment which is the base for the Tourism sector. The people usually want to visit those places which will provide them the solace. The natural scenic beauty is usually present in the countryside. Now, in order to develop the countryside into tourist places, it is necessary to make the participation of the local populace active. The local people of the tourist destination should get the benefits of the tourism equally, so they will encourage tourism. The participation of the local people in a planned manner will ultimately make the tourism sustainable.

2. Literature Review:-

The concept of community based tourism was first of all used by Murphy (Murphy, 1980). Many researchers have studied the concept of community based tourism in different parts of the world such as in Africa, Asia, Oceania, Latin America, etc. Perception of tourism is based on the evaluation of local community's attitude (including the environment, infrastructure and events): the participation model of local community exerts powerful influence on the tourist's experience and tourism planning effects the community as a whole (Briedenhann and Wickens, 2004).

Community based tourism is a form of tourism that arose to offset the negative impacts of mass tourism (Mtapur and Giampocoli, 2013) such as leakages and falling of local control of natural resources. Community based tourism is gaining popularity and it is increasingly being promoted as a means of reducing poverty and fostering local community development (Runyowa, 2017). But for some local community, tourism can be a driving force of the overall development and for others it may cause negative.....(Nagarjuna, 2015). So, the local community involvement becomes fundamental in order to increase the benefits of tourism and to minimize the negative impacts.

Community participation and tourism for community development was difficult to be ignored in rural areas that have close knit community systems. The community based tourism concept has been at the forefront of the promotion of rural development, both in developed and developing countries (Honey, 2008). Almost all the countries are planning to promote community based tourism, especially in rural areas for the wellbeing of local people. Even rural India has immense potential for community based tourism as the rural India is still unexplored (Kumar, 2004).

3. Research methodology:-

This paper is the study of definitions related to the tourism, community and community based tourism and the perspectives of the CBT around the world and in India. Various books and research papers have been studied for completing this paper. Online sources have also been taken for this paper. So, this paper is based on the secondary data collected from different sources.

4. Tourism:-

Today tourism is one of the largest and dynamically developing sectors of external economic activities. It's high growth and development rates, considerable volumes of foreign currency inflows, infrastructure development and introduction of new management and educational experience actively contribute to the social and economic development of the country as a whole (CBSE).

Tourism refers to the activity which is conducted for a short period of time , more than 24 hours and less than a year, for a non-remunerative purpose (CBSE). This definition gives the time dimension of tourism and the tourist does not get any physical return from the tourism activities but he gets the mental reward which can be felt by him through his senses. WTO also defines tourism as comprising the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.

Wahab defined tourism as a human intentional activity that serves as a mean of communication and as a link of interaction between the people, inside a country or even beyond its geographical demarcations. It involves the temporary displacement of people from one region to another , country or even continent, with the objective of satisfying necessities and not realisation of remunerated activity. For the visited country , tourism is an industry whose products are consumed in loco, producing invisible exports (Wahab, S-E).

Hunziker and Kraft defined tourism as the sum of phenomenon and relationships arising from the travel and stay of non-residents in so far as they do not lead to permanent residence and are not concerned with any earning activity (CBSE).

All the given above definitions define tourism as an activity which is done by leaving ones residential place and going to some other place only for the purpose of pleasure and not getting any remuneration in money. So, the tourism for a tourist is not for earning purposes but it is the main industry for the locals, hoteliers, transporters and government for earning the revenues. According to WTTC, for every \$1 generated in direct travel and tourism GDP, more than \$2 are generated on an indirect / or induced basis. In 2019, the sector employed 1 in 10 people on the planet and it created 1 in 4 of all new jobs globally in the last few years. Moreover, tourism sector also helps in the empowerment of women as tourism sector has almost twice as many women employees as other sectors and employs a higher share of youth than the overall economy (WTTC).

5. Community :-

In the context of tourism, community can be defined in terms of geographical area or a group of people with shared interests. If the geographical area definition is used, a community can be defined as all the citizens in a given area. Furthermore, if the common interest approach is taken, the tendency to emphasize the importance of economic factors means that the business sector often represents the local community (Aas et al., 2005).

Community means the people who live within a geographically defined area and have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live (Mattessich and Money, 2004). According to national research council, community is a grouping of people who live close to one another and are united by common interests and mutual aid. Warren defines community as a combination of social units and systems which perform the major social functions..... (and) the organisation of social activities (Mattessich and Money, 2004).

In the above definitions, it becomes clear that community is the group of people who live together and who have some common interests. Community lives in a defined geographical area and they have the special ties with the place they live in. So, it becomes clear that they can share the benefits resulting from any activity organized or managed jointly and can preserve the culture, tradition and environment of the same place for the future generations. So the involvement of the community is essential for any project as Honey recommends the inclusion of local community in the planning and decision making process if the project is to deliver sustainable benefits to the local level (Honey, 2008). Same is the case with tourism projects which can be undertaken and managed by the host community at their own level with some external help. McIntyre, Hetherington and Inskip defined the community from the tourism point of view as 'any homogeneous place capable of tourism development.... below the national and regional level (McIntyre, Hetherington and Inskip).

6. Community Based Tourism :-

Travel and tourism sector has tremendous social impact on local communities and the lives and livelihoods of people touched by this sector and through the revenues and jobs that it provides, travel and tourism helps reduce poverty and improve health, housing, education and overall well-being (WTTC 2021). Moreover, to make tourism sustainable the host community participation is important as public involvement functions as a driving force to protect the community's natural environment and culture as tourism products, while simultaneously encouraging greater tourism related activities (Felstead, 2000).

Community based tourism refers to tourism activities and services which have been developed by local community members, working together in a 'community based tourism ' club or group, sometimes in partnership with the private sector (UNWTO). Community based tourism is tourism activity, community owned and operated and managed or coordinated at the community level that contributes to the wellbeing of community through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and natural and cultural heritage sources. Community based tourism is a form of tourism that seeks to empower communities to manage tourism to their well-being and includes economic, social and environmental sustainable development (asean.org).

Community members design tourism programs based on special elements of local life, culture and nature which they feel proud and comfortable to share with visitors (UNWTO). Community based tourism centres on the involvement of the host community in planning and maintaining tourism development in order to create a more sustainable industry (Hall C. M.). Community based tourism empowers local communities to determine and secure their socio-economic futures through fee-for-service activities that usually present and celebrate local traditions and life style, conserve natural and cultural resources and foster equitable and mutually beneficial host-guest interaction. Community based tourism usually caters for niche markets such as adventure tourism, cultural tourism, eco-tourism and agri-tourism, but draws on local products and services to spread the economic benefit from engaging

in tourism (asean.org). Community based tourism offers visitors a unique opportunity to meet local people, experience and learn about local culture, livelihoods and the natural world directly from local people (UNWTO).

Despite the various benefits of community based tourism there are some barriers or hindrances which check the participation of local or host community in the tourism related activities. Barriers like lack of education, business inexperience, insufficient financial assistance and conflicting vested interests have to be overcome before public involvement can be embraced (Elsuko Okazaki, 2008). Participation of local people is not only about achieving the more efficient and more equitable distribution of material resources: it is also about the sharing of knowledge and the transformation of the process of learning itself in the service of people's self development (Connell, 1997). Community residents need adequate resources and skills to acquire the capacity to take part, the power to obtain them is often held by the governments or other stakeholders who do not regard local residents as equal partners (Gray, 1985). Understanding the relationship between local participation and local power structures, a key aspect of community development, will help to dismantle rather than reinforce barriers to local democracy (Kirsty, 2005).

7. Community based tourism across the world :-

As mass tourism has put immense pressure on the resources of the destination places and have increased congestion, the world now wants alternate forms of tourism such as eco-tourism, rural tourism or community based tourism. Following is a picture of some of the nations who are trying to move towards community based tourism.

- 7.1. **Costa Rica:** "This country made sustainable tourism part of its DNA, focussing its entire value proposition around the development of sustainable tourism products and services with low environmental impact and a positive impact on the wellbeing of its local communities. According to social progress index(SPI), tourist destinations in Costa Rica have a greater positive social impact within their communities than the surrounding areas as per the following measures of social progress: access to basic medical care, water and sanitation, shelter, personal safety, access to information and communication, environmental quality and access to advanced education" (wtcc.org).
- 7.2. **Malaysia:-** "Travel and Tourism sector which experienced strong 6.1 percent GDP growth during 2010-19 has had a significant impact on local communities. As early as 1995, Malaysia Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture launched its Homestay Experience Programme to create economic opportunities for rural communities to participate and benefit from the tourism sector, in turn reducing the need for the tourism communities to migrate to urban centres" (wtcc.org).
- 7.3. **Tanzania :-** "Tourism activity around Mount Kilimanjaro is a great example of how the tourist site can generate revenue both for the park and members of local communities. In fact, the Kilimanjaro Park Authority and Tanzania National Park Authority have demonstrated their commitment to eco-tourism and to local community involvement. Of the total revenue derived from the sale of tourism packages in this area each year, about 28 percent (US\$ 13 million) is used for poverty reduction initiatives" (wtcc.org).
- 7.4. **Ethiopia:-** "To benefit local communities and generate jobs, the World Bank Group invested \$ 35 million to support tourism development in three targeted destinations namely Addis Ababa, Lalibela and Axum. Some of the strategies included destination development in and around World Heritage sites, product development through support for SMEs, community engagement and institutional capacity building" (wtcc.org).
- 7.5. **UAE :-** "Dubai embedded the principles of sustainability across the Travel and Tourism sector creating the Dubai Sustainable Tourism (DST) in 2009 to address sustainability concerns whilst also prioritising poverty reduction and social inclusion. DST was developed as a public-private partnership including civil society, which aims to improve energy efficiency, protect the environment, enhance awareness and education" (wtcc.org).
- 7.6. **Spain :-** "In Palma de Mallorca, the local government created a sustainable tourism tax in July 2016 to ensure the sustainable growth of the sector. Overall, the project enable Palma to invest its earnings from tourism tax into sustainable projects, which not only contribute positively to Palma's Travel and Tourism sector but also to enhance the quality of life of the local communities" (wtcc.org).
- 7.7. **Mexico:-** "To enhance its social and cultural impact in Mexico, Cancun designed and implemented the Maya Ka'an Campaign, which showcases the magnificence of the Mayan culture and encourages tourists to learn about the Mayan culture by proactively engaging indigenous communities through an eco-tourism friendly lens. The project was established to help enhance the inclusivity of indigenous Mayans whilst also making sure it remained sustainable and community-based. All of the activities, experiences and services are managed by local communities" (wtcc.org).
- 7.8. **Portugal :-** "As MICE(meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions) tourism grew in Portugal in the 1990s, the country saw a number of regeneration projects being implemented benefitting not only tourists but also local communities. One such example is the preparation for Expo 98 in Lisbon, which involved a major urban regeneration project on the bank the River Tagus" (wtcc.org).
- 7.9. **Nepal:-** "In Madi valley, Nepal, the Shivadwar Village community reached out to the non-profit World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Nepal for help in 2015. WWF Nepal was able to apply for funding through their Business Partnership Platform and partnered up with travel company Intrepid to help the village develop a Community Based Tourism project. Today, 13 out of the 34 homes in Shivadwar Village operate as homestays with the income going directly to the families" (Katherine and Gallagher).
- 7.10. **Bolivia:-** "The Chalalan Eco lodge is a joint indigenous community tourism initiative of the rainforest community of San Jose de Uchupiamonas and Conservation International(CI) in the Bolivian Amazon. Created in 1995 by a group of villagers and supported by CI through training in skills like management, housekeeping and tour guiding, Chalalan is the oldest community based enterprise in Bolivia. By Feb 2021, the indigenous community received full ownership of the property from CI and now directly supports 74 families (Katherine and Gallagher).
- 7.11. **Kyrgyzstan:-** "The Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan has fully embraced community based tourism (CBT) programs as a tool for growth. The Kyrgyz CBT association has developed 15 different diverse CBT programs around the country, helping to organize and train remote mountain communities in tourism to help improve their economies and living conditions. One of the most successful is the tiny village of Tamchy, found right next to Issyk-Kul, the biggest lake in Kyrgyzstan and one of the largest mountain lakes in the world" (Katherine and Gallagher).

Community based tourism initiatives in India:-

India is a vast country with diverse landscape and vegetation. Every region of the country has its special features, traditions, culture, scenic beauty which attract the tourists from all over the world. With a lot of tourism potential our country is also heading towards the alternate forms of tourism. Some of the areas which are heading towards CBT are mentioned as following:-

- 7.12. **Kerala :-** “Mothakara is a small village located in Wayanad, a northern hilly district of Kerala, south India. A village committee has been formed under a local organisation and they are managing tourism at village level. The homestay, guides, taxis and all other people involved in this programme were empowered to successfully run the programme. Five farmer families are offering homestays for the travellers and considering this as an additional income. A village development fund has been set up and 10 percent of the income from tourism goes to this fund. This money is funding larger sustainable activities of the village such as waste management, awareness creation, etc” (worldnomads.com).
- 7.13. **Madhya Pradesh :-** “Renest Bandhavgarh Meadows located near the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh organises tours of the Biaga tribals. On clear full moon nights there is the local Biaga dance called Karma, along with a bonfire where the tourist’s are encouraged to join the locals in the dance ritual followed by a hearty dinner under the Jamun tree canopy. The Biaga tribals are the farmers who tend small tracts of land all around the tiger reserve growing local varieties of maize, rice and mainly wheat” (hindustanres.com).
- 7.14. **Sikkim :-** “Darap is a small village in west Sikkim at an altitude of 5100 feet above sea level whereas Pastanga in Lingzey is a small village in East Sikkim at an altitude of 4676 feet above sea level. In both these villages CBT development model has been implemented. 80 percent in Darap and 75 percent in Pastanga villagers believe that CBT has created jobs in the village and jobs are good. Both the villages have good recreational facilities. Both the villages r of Darap and Pastanga strongly believe that touri has helped them to preserve and promote their uniqueness and they take pride for developing their villages for CBT” (Manjula and Rinzing, 2014).
- 7.15. **Uttarakhand:-** “Pawalgarh is an area in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Pawalgarh Prakrati Prahai (PPP), a local youth group provides a unique platform where individual homestay owners will sign an agreement obliging them to follow the terms and conditions laid down by PPP and in turn avail the benefits of the PPP agreement. This is indeed an innovation in CBT in India. Once PPP established, there began an intensive training of nature guides through Titli trust over seventy work days. The PPP, with the help of organisations and persons such as Titli trust and Manral Ji are attempting to move towards a model of CBT in the Pawalgarh region. PPP now intends to begin homestay services, both community homestays and individual homestays for visits in the Pawalgarh conservation Reserve landscape” (Seema Bhat, 2019).
- 7.16. **West Bengal:-** “A village, Latpanchar, in West Bengal has been developing as a CBT destination. The economy of this village is mainly based on agriculture and forestry. This village has very much potential for being developed as tourist destination due to its natural scenery and wildlife. There is only one private hotel, ' Himalayan Resorts', which offers few rooms with basic facilities, but recently accommodation provided by the villagers very cosy in nature. Most of the tourists try to stay at the village as they got lot of preferences there. In this area, tourism is becoming one of the key driving forces in the economic development of both the village and district as a whole. Therefore, diverse community tourism initiatives are being created with the aim of ensuring that the wealth generated through tourism has a direct impact on the residents of Latpanchar” (Suman Paul, 2014).
- 7.17. **Ladakh:-** “Korzok, village in Ladakh, has developed a CBT model based on homestays with younger community members earning jobs as porters, cooks and tour guides. During the tourist season from June to September, the occupancy rate for homestays is 80 percent, earning each family an average of \$700 to \$1200 during those four months” (Katherine and Gallagher).

8. Limitations :-

This paper attempts to provide the concept of community based tourism and to show some perspectives. In this paper, only some definitions of the tourism, community and CBT are mentioned. There are so many definitions of these terms which are not touched, so further research is needed to provide a very clear picture of these terms. Furthermore, only some countries and some states of India are presented in this paper which makes the way open for further collection of facts or data in the future to present a clear picture of the CBT model throughout the world and especially in our country, India.

9. Conclusion:-

Tourism, being a fastest growing industry in the world, tends to encourage the development of multi-use infrastructure that benefits the host community, including various means of transports, health care facilities and sports centres in addition to the hotels and high-end restaurants that cater to foreign visitors. Understanding that tourism development may result in many and complex impacts that local elected official, the tourism industry and community residents need to work cooperatively and carefully for its growth and development (CBSE).The participation of host community in the planning and management of tourism is necessary in order to make the tourism sustainable and eco-friendly. The local community needs the awareness and training of how to deal with the different products of tourism and how to attract the tourists to their respective areas. Moreover, the local community needs the amount for investing in the tourism related businesses for which they must get the help from the government institutions and the organisations meant for this.

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