





Research Article

Residents' Perceptions and Outcomes of Community-Based Tourism in Andro Village of Manipur

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Abstract: Community-based Tourism (CBT) has various impacts on local communities in terms of socio-economic conditions, cultural heritage, environmental safeguards, and overall sustainable development of tourism in the long run. Sustainable development in tourism can be achieved through the independence of local communities and their active participation in tourism activities. Aiming to examine if there is any role of CBT in reaching sustainable goals for tourism, a case study that focuses on the social, economic, environmental and quality of life of the local community of Andro village in Manipur has been taken for study.

The result of the present study was able to indicate the occurrence of Community-Based Tourism in Andro village and it has been able to contribute to the overall sustainable development of the people and tourism activities. There have been diverse benefits to the local residents, which include job creation, local economic development, helping eco-friendly tourism development, community empowerment and preserving the unique cultural and traditional identity of the local community.

Keywords: Community, Economic Development, Environment, Social Identity, Sustainability.

I. Introduction

Tourism is now -a- days affecting the lives of rural people and is often seen as a tool for development (Ashley and Roe, 1998, Neto, 2002, Harrison, 2004) and is therefore viewed as a community and economic development tool that serves certain ends (Mc Cool et al., 2001, Davis and Morais, 2004). According to UNWTO (2013), tourism can be seen as a way to offer opportunities for local communities to reach sustainability by managing their cultural and natural assets and to offer amenities that benefit their economy by creating job opportunities and other socioeconomic development. Locally-based community tourism emphasizes local residents of an area working together for joint economic gains and raising their living



standards by using their cultural and natural resources (Hall, 2000). In fact, in community-based tourism (CBT) the community itself has control over tourism management and it receives a significant proportion of the benefits generated by tourism activities (Trejos and Chiang, 2009). Again, in simple terms CBT can be defined as tourism “managed and owned by the community, for the community” (Asker et al., 2010). It rests on the idea that because it is the local community that creates tourism opportunities and is affected by its development, its members should be involved in the decision-making processes of tourism development and should be able to better manage the impacts of tourism based on their concerns (Murphy, 1985, Milne, 2006). Functioning through CBT, the community is said to receive a wide variety of benefits, including economic, socio-cultural, and environmental ones (Armstrong, 2012) which can be in one way a sustainable development for the people and tourism itself. The long-term growth in the tourism sector can be accomplished with the participation of host communities in planning tourism as well as developmental activities (Stiglitz, 2002, Cole, 2006). Moreover, knowledge exchange among communities and tourists, self-development of residents, and impartial distribution of tangible and intangible resources can be achieved by in-depth participation of the community (Connell & Rugendyke, 2008).

CBT is the other popular alternative offered to the traditional tourism development style and it can be defined as “tourism based on negotiation and participation with key stakeholders as the local community of the destination (Saarinen, 2006). There is no need for advanced physical capital and advanced skills for participation in tourism activities. CBT emphasizes the participation and awareness of the local community empowerment and independence to develop tourism in a sustainable manner. Further through training, it also enhances the skills of community members for better interpretation of local natural and cultural aspects to the tourists. Community involvement in tourism has been receiving increasing attention because of the success and sustainability of tourism development. The active support of the local population and higher levels of integration leads to socio-economic benefits for the community (Mitchell and Eagles, 2001).

In recent years, tourism has evolved into a business, rather than an industry. The local communities must supply tourists with all the products and commodities based on a combination of tangible and intangible resources, which makes the local communities more important stakeholders or key players in the world of tourism (Mason, 2020). According to Hiwasaki (2006), CBT has four major objectives, firstly tourism in an area must have a positive impact on the conservation of natural and cultural resources in the area. Secondly, tourism must bring about socio-economic development in the local community. Thirdly, there must be an increase in the number of businesses whose ownership is in the hands of the local community and finally, quality levels regarding the experience of tourists visiting the area must be established. Local communities can be of immense help while giving in-depth information on the history, traditions, and environment of a tourist

destination (Stone, 2012). Participation of local communities in the planning of tourism-related developmental activities can be beneficial in long-term planning.

II. An Overview of Andro Village

Andro is a scheduled caste village located at a distance of 25 kms from Imphal, the capital of Manipur. According to the census of 2011, the total geographical area of the village is 308.7 hectares. The village has a total population of 1,014 persons, out of which the male population is 506 while the female population is 508. The literacy rate is 39.64% out of which 40.32% of males and 38.98% of females. There are about 207 houses in Andro village. (Indian Village Directory, 2015)

Blessed with natural scenic beauty, the village creates an authentic Manipuri village with main attraction like Mutua Bahadur cultural complex where the cultural complex cum Museum houses various potteries, rare coins, rare manuscripts of the state, paintings, basketry, bell metals, pieces of jewellery, wood carving, musical instrument, and a doll house which showcase dolls belonging to 29 different communities of Manipur. It is a cultural hub of Manipur where some of the state's ethnic heritage, cultural practices and age-old traditions can be witnessed. Andro is famous for its unique style of pottery where the village craftsmen use a rare form of pottery called "Charai Taba" or coil pottery in which a uniquely shaped wooden bat is used to mould the clay instead of a pottery wheel. This flat-surfaced bat is used to deftly pound the clay into whatever shape or design the potter wants to create. It is then sun-dried for four days before being baked in the fire. The pots are then given a special shine by using a natural dye made from the bark of a local tree. (Masurkar, 2021) Another interesting fact about the village is the sacred fire that burnt in the temple of "Panam Ningthou", regarded as the governing deity of the village. As per locals if the fire gets extinguished, then there is going to be a disaster in the village. Every two households in the village are entrusted with the responsibility of managing the fire for one day. It is then passed on to the next two houses the next day and so on throughout the entire year until each household would have borne the responsibility at least once a year. (*ibid*)

The Santhai Natural Park is also one of the prime tourist attractions of the region, which is an outcome of the villagers' zeal for the conservation of nature and its rational utilization. An artificial dam has been routed making it enchantingly beautiful and serving as a water body cum source of public utility. Now the spot has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Manipur. Infrastructure Development of Tourist Destination of Santhai Natural Park Andro, Imphal East District' was funded by North East Council (NEC) in the planning year 2013-14. The estimated cost of the project was Rs. 478.00 lakhs. (Imphal East District, 2022) The picturesque natural park is dotted with small trees for shade and is thus an excellent venue for organizing a picnic. The park facilitates cooking food there and having a proper picnic in the truest sense of the term in the

heart of nature. The reservoir and dam, built by the villagers at the foothills offer a picturesque view of the scene all around. The villagers set an example by maintaining the dam and the park in pristine conditions because of their economic importance. The park was opened to the public and tourists on 29th June 2017.



Fig. 1: Map of Manipur indicating Andro Village. courtesy: NER databank



Fig. 2: Andro Pottery
Courtesy: thefloatingpebbles.com



Fig. 3: Andro Cultural Complex
Courtesy:tripoto.com



Fig. 4: Santhei Natural Park
Courtesy:imphaleast.nic.in



Fig. 5: Panam Ningthou Temple
Courtesy: tripoto.com

Tourism and its related activities are still at grassroot level in Manipur and so most of the tourist attractions and spots are mostly underutilised and underdeveloped in their full potential. It is in recent years that the Government has introduced the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model for developing tourism and taking it to another level. In these recent years too, there has been an emergence among the people regarding the potential and advantages of tourism activities in their village or local areas. They have started concentrating on developing tourism prospects in their capacity and as private entrepreneurs which can lead to positive changes in their lifestyle and socio-economic conditions. As Andro village can be seen as becoming a hot spot tourist destination in the state of Manipur, the local residents have also started participating and have made up a community to look after the demands of tourism activities and the needs of the visitors. Apart from meeting the needs and demands of tourism activities in Andro village, there arise certain queries like how the local community is looking after their essential requirements for day-to-day living. Is there an inter-relationship between their tourism developmental activities and meeting the needs of their day-to-day life? How does community involvement in local area tourism shapes their lives and the surrounding environment is a substantial question that needs some findings.

III. Objectives

The key focus of the present research work is to study the outcome of Community Based Tourism (CBT) in Andro Village and to investigate the local community's perception of the role of community-based tourism for socio-economic growth with sustainable tourism development in the village.

IV. Methods and Database

The study made use of both primary and secondary sources. The survey started on 5th February 2022 and continued till 10th April 2022. A total of 205 subjects were taken through purposive sampling.

Primary data collection includes formal in-depth interviews with key stakeholders of the village which include the village chief also called *Khullakpa*, Village Pradhan, business holder/entrepreneurs, residents with tourism-related occupations, etc. Structured questionnaires were also administered to understand the perceptions regarding CBT from the local community. Participant observation was also observed as this method often entails the researcher becoming a resident in a community for several months and observing the normal daily lives of its members (Pratt & Loizos, 1992). Participant observation helps to understand relatively intricate conditions and to obtain information from individuals like women, children and suspecting adults. A daily journal was kept to interpret, refute, verify, qualify or add to the other data collected. Principal ways in which the participant observation technique was applied were as follows:

1. Attending community or tourism committee meetings;
2. Chatting with children and women about their activities and attitudes towards tourism

3. Becoming an active tourist (e.g., staying in local accommodations, trying out the local food items, going on guided tours, bargaining for handicrafts etc.

Secondary data were also obtained which include journals, books, Government reports, and the internet as well.

V. Results and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Class	Freq	Percentage
Age	20 - 29	43	17.2
	30 - 39	104	41.6
	40 - 49	64	25.6
	50 - 59	36	14.4
	60 - 69	3	1.2
Gender	Male	140	56
	Female	110	44
Education	Male	47	65.28
	Female	25	34.72
Matriculation	Male	67	54.47
	Female	56	45.53
Undergraduate	Male	25	54.35
	Female	21	45.65
Graduate	Male	9	100.00
	Female	0	0
Post-graduate	Male	96	53.93
	Female	82	46.07
Job connected with tourism Full time	Male	44	61.11
	Female	28	38.89

Table 1. shows the Socio-demographic profile of the respondents. It can be known from the Table that the age group ranging from 30-39 years are mostly involved in tourism related activities with 41.6%. Both the males and females are equally engaged in full-time jobs related to tourism with 53.93% and 46.07% respectively. For part-time tourism-related jobs and activities, the males are found to be actively involved in larger numbers than the females.

VI. Economic Upliftment and Employment for Local Communities

The economic impact of CBT is perceived positively by the local community. It decreases unemployment by creating various job opportunities and lead to income generation for the local community. There was an enhancement in the production of local products mainly in the items of pottery and locally brewed wine. Both men and women are engaged in the brewing of the traditional wine, which is a private business and the profits goes directly to the business owner. Making of traditional handloom and handicrafts products also got a boost

and sometimes the demand exceeds the production which is due to its unique traditional element aspects, tourist and visitors have got strong interest. The unemployed local youths of Andro village have got themselves involved in tourism activities and planning which has created a platform for job creation and income generation. Most of the tourism activities in which the local youth get involved include acting as a tour guide, maintenance of the Santhei natural park, running food stalls and restaurants, small hotel businesses and other small businesses. Women in the village has been able to leave the kitchen responsibilities and household chores and get an opportunity to work outside their home, and generate their income.

The most positive aspect of CBT in Andro village is that tourism does not increase or affect the cost of living for the local community nor there is seasonality of jobs and human labours as most of the tourism work and programmes have been implemented at the village level by the community. They have made arrangements for year-long tourism activities apart from the coming of seasonal tourists. Due to the noticeable economic benefits of tourism activities, male participants in CBT were found to be more willing to contribute to the working, design, development and maintenance of tourist spots and sites in Andro village. CBT in Andro village is getting self-reliant, and has great potential to go further progress in terms of economic sustainability from tourism.

VII. Improvement In Quality Of Social Life And Local Area Development

Significant improvements in the quality of social life which include income and employment, material well-being, health, safety and community welfare have been found among the residents since the introduction of CBT in Andro village. With increasing infrastructure expansion and local area development, even the local residents have admitted excess to recreational opportunities and socialisation. Opportunities for interaction and social exchange with tourists or visitors increase which overall helps in the preservation and upliftment of the cultural and social identity of the local community.

The local residents of Andro village feel an enhancement in self-esteem because of outside recognition of the uniqueness and value of their culture and traditional knowledge. Access to various job opportunities and money leads to an increase in status for usually low-status residents such as previously unemployed youth and women. Protection of local heritage and a renaissance-like regeneration of traditional arts and crafts, handloom and handicrafts get an enrichment. The pride in the village community's cultural identity is strong and no occasions of moral degradation due to cultural differences and negative changes in the local culture and traditions have been found.

VIII. Contribution to Conservation of Natural Environment

Nature and its resources are an important source of enticing tourists or visitors in Andro village. With a purpose of attaining social, natural and sustainable principles, community-centred tourism is a form of ecotourism that targets to enchant tourists and visitors as well as protect the natural environment. It includes the management of nature, culture, flora, fauna, water, forest, landform, and other important heritage. To attain long-term environmental and developmental advantages, the interrelationship of various environmental resources is being maintained properly by the major stakeholders which are the local community in the village area of Andro.

It was observed that the implementation of an entry fee in the Santhei Natural Park makes the park exclusive for visitors, determines the purpose of the visit, and generates revenue. The income from these fees provides an opportunity for expenditure in awareness generation, training for the securities, new development inside the park, increase in safety measures, and reduction of ecosystem-related problems inside the park. Moreover, due to high tourism activities, the villagers have given more attention to the care and maintenance of the natural environment so that the natural habitat of the flora and fauna would not be disturbed and surveillance for the protection of the natural landscape from damages caused by unwanted and harmful tourism activities are being done. Due to the combined effort and commitment of the community, Andro village had been branded as one of the best hotspots for eco-tourism in Manipur.

IX. Perception of Community Based Tourism by the Local Residents

The perception of Tourism development by the local community of Andro village is that Tourism industry relies heavily upon the local residents and community's goodwill and therefore, the tourism development should meet the local residents' needs and requirements because the positive attitude of residents is essential for visitors or tourist satisfaction and for repeat visitation. Tamir,2015 pointed out that a lack of knowledge about the meaning and values of CBT is a significant factor that could affect the participation of communities and the competence of the tourism sector. The majority of villagers in Andro perceive CBT development as a strategy and a type of tourism that not only contributes to the local economy but also to community development, and natural resource preservation. Strategic management of CBT at the community level is being developed in the village.

The main factors that make CBT successful according to Mathieson and Wall (1982) are the availability and quality of social amenities and attitude towards tourists. The present village has made it all available in a decent way and the overall expectation is that the local community of the village does not have to go to other places in search of employment and to have control over their land, surrounding environment and community's future. CBT in Andro village is carried out with constructive strategies of the people based on empowering the

community through private or group ownership in tourism development, involving the community in every tourism-related activity, developing community pride, improving the quality of life of the local people, ensure environmental preservation, maintain uniqueness and social characteristics of the local culture and distribute profits equitably to community members.

A systematic diagram presentation of CBT in Andro village is represented in the following manner.

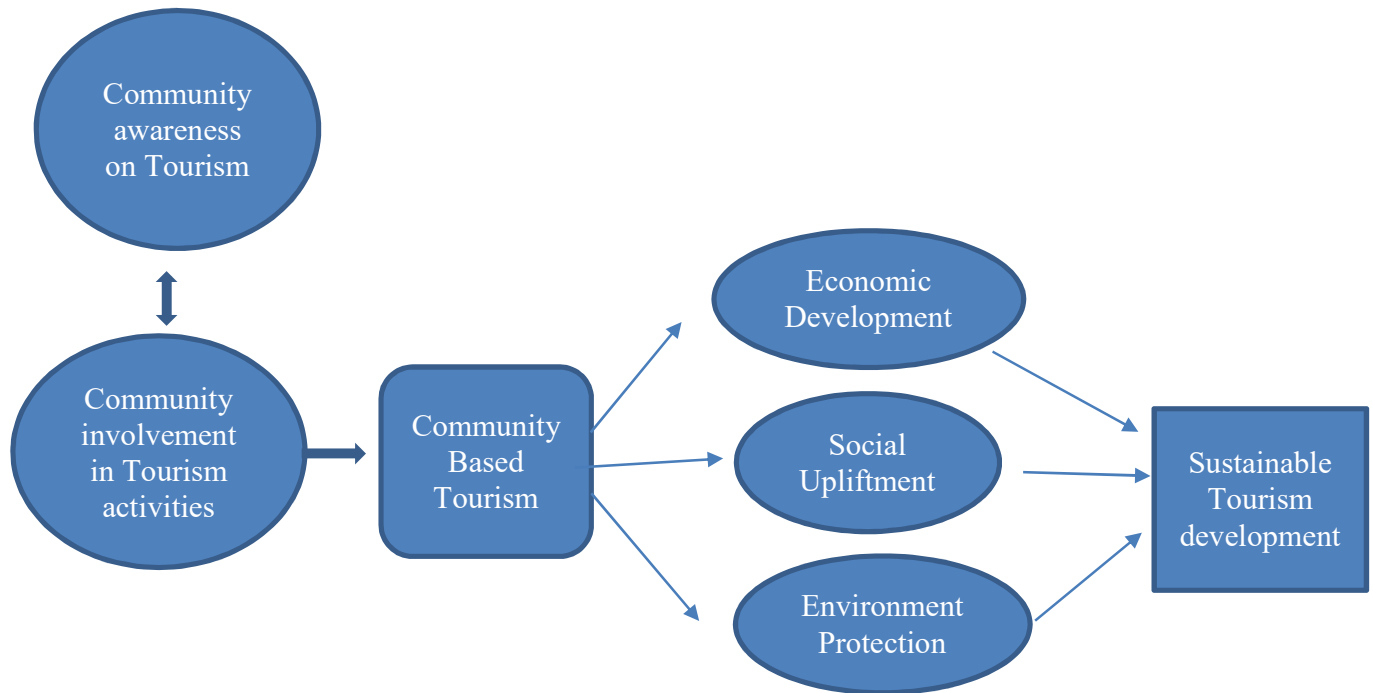


Fig. 6: Diagram depicting functioning of CBT in Andro village.

X. Conclusion and Recommendations

Local residents' perception and involvement towards tourism development are considered vital for a long-term run and success of a tourist destination. Each tourism-oriented community should involve itself in the development and planning process and for a successful implementation of CBT, the capacity of the community must be assessed based on perceptions, collaboration and communications.

The local communities of Andro village have directed their own tourism development through a vision, commitment, self-awareness and self-reliance. Andro village community has perfectly set an example for the importance of community integration and working closely at the onset of tourism development to design and deliver the required demands. The Government also has to be considerate and careful in terms of the local sentiments regarding their economic and livelihood means before undertaking any big step towards PPP model in Andro village. Opening up a big tourism project by a firm or individual under PPP model can have a danger

of marginalising the local communities. Therefore, local residents and community interest cannot be undermined by the Government if sustainable and long-lasting tourism plans are to be implemented in Andro village.

It can be concluded that in the village of Andro, the local community understands the revenues of tourism activities in a tourist destination and they are ready to get involved at the community level to bring about economic, social and environmental sustainability in the long run.

Availability of Data and Materials: Primary and secondary datas were utilized for this study.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

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