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# An Empirical Study Of Sustainable Or Community-Based Tourism In Jammu And Kashmir W.R.T. Potential Tourist Attractions

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## ABSTRACT

In the current study, researchers highlighted the obstacles that prevent locals from being involved in the improvement of tourist attractions. By conducting an in-depth analysis of many pre-selected tourist hotspots in J&K, this study seeks to establish the truth and provide supporting evidence. This research aimed to measure the level of participation of locals in shaping their communities into tourist hotspots. Additionally, this research aims to empirically test the M-O-A (Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability) model for community participation at the chosen sites, as well as investigate the perspectives of the key stakeholders (government, local political bodies, business operator group, and the community group) on community-based tourism progress. The outcomes of this study will allow policymakers to better understand the obstacles that locals see when trying to take part in community-based vacations, and they may use those insights to better facilitate these kinds of trips. Jammu, a city in J&K, was chosen for this research. Small-scale research and interviews with focus groups served as the pilot survey's data collection methods at the destination of choice. Experts were consulted once the pilot research was completed to refine the questionnaire for the full study. Using a questionnaire, we gathered information from the J&K tourist hotspots, which we then analysed statistically in several ways.

**Keywords:** Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Tourism, Hotspots, Community, Sustainable Development.

## INTRODUCTION

Today, tourism is seen as a potential driver of economic development as for “least-developed countries” (LDCs), it has become an increasingly significant economic sector (UNCTAD Report, 2007). Without a doubt, tourism helps local economies, generates jobs, promotes sustainable development, and may even lead the charge in the transition to a Green Economy. Earnings from exports to developed nations' domestic markets increased from \$50 billion in 1990 to over \$260 billion in 2007; by 2014, the market was worth \$7 trillion, or over 9 percent of the global GDP. The numbers reveal that tourism is

on the rise; in 2014, 1,135 million people travelled internationally, an increase of 48 million from the previous year (UNWTO, 2004). The tourism industry has more opportunities than most others to boost pro-poor development.

Choi and Sirakaya (2005) argue that tourism may help economies in underdeveloped countries grow and flourish, hence reducing poverty. In addition, tourism is an "instrument of international peace" that aids in the general progress of civilizations. Though it is true that the vacation industry has positive belongings on financial prudence, unchecked development has had undesirable consequences for the natural and social-cultural landscapes of many popular tourist spots (Li, 2005). As a result of these unintended consequences, there is rising anxiety about the future of our planet's natural resources, our society's health, and local economies (Kontogeorgopoulos, 2005). A growing consciousness of the reputation of tourism to local economies has prompted a focus on how to grow the business in a sustainable way. There is a growing realization that tourism must be sustainable because of the significant effects it has on both people and the environment.

The objective of rural tourism is to create a system wherein local communities can take charge of and care for their own rich cultural history and natural resources. The accomplishment of rural tourism is dependent on the combination of historical sites, and cultural, and traditional activities carried out by the local people, setting it apart from other types of tourism. The principles of sustainable tourism growth would be easier to put into practice if locals had a restored chance of promoting the growth of the tourism industry in their communities. This would lead to a more optimistic view of tourism and an increased willingness to protect natural and cultural landmarks (Inskeep, 1994).

In sustainable development, the idea of community involvement is given prime importance (Murphy, 2014). Communities benefit greatly from visitors, and vice versa. Sustainable development is being aided by both the local community and tourist spending. It argues that sustainable development relies on local community participation in tourism-related initiatives since these groups show a crucial role in the formation of tourist products and tourism development. Since tourism is so important to modern economies, it should be fostered with the welfare of local populations in mind. The windfall from tourists should be directed into local communities. Community-based research is essential for improving people's lives on the ground. Recognizing the elements that have an impact on community engagement in tourism and the actions that result is essential for grasping its full significance. Previously, no studies had been undertaken explaining the influence of means of participation on the objectives of participation, therefore the combination of means and end streams of research in tourism led to a memorandum of agreement (MOA) in community involvement. According to the MOA model, the mark to which a distinct participates within the community are closely related to their levels of motivation, opportunity, and ability to do so.

Nonetheless, local traditions are often endangered and forgotten within the globalization process. Projects that preserve cultural values and integrity and are consistent with social identity and heritage benefit from an understanding of cultural contexts. Therefore, this argument bolsters the idea that fostering community-based tourism may help alleviate pressing issues such as unemployment and poverty at the travel destination. Native Americans may benefit from the tourist industry as proprietors as well as employees by capitalizing on their rich cultural history. They often participate in local projects that provide the potential for collaboration with public and non-profit sectors (DeRose, 2003). Communities in tourist destination 9 regions should be involved in tourism development planning since their residents will be directly affected by the industry (Li, 2004). Communities' levels of engagement in tourist development vary greatly, and many variables influence their involvement (Goodwin, 2008).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Global tourism is always expanding at a rapid rate (UNWTO, 2004). In terms of both economic and social progress, it is seen as a sector that is on the upswing. Increasing disposable income, internet booking, well-organized tours, improved transit alternatives, simple access to information, and a plethora of readily available tourist resources all contribute to a rise in the global tourist population (Davis, Allen, & Cosenza, 1998). Global visitor visits increased by 4.7% from 2013 to 2014, reaching 1,138 million, and a further 2%-3% rise is predicted for 2015. The tourism industry is a major economic driver, contributing billions of dollars and millions of jobs to the economic recovery of many nations.

The travel industry brought in \$1,197 billion in 2013. Growth in Asia and the Pacific (+5%) trailed behind that of the Americas (+7%) in 2014. Moreover, (UNWTO, 2004) predicts that the upsurge in tourist influxes in Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas would continue from around +4% to +5%. A growing number of nations' governments are shifting their focus to tourism to reap the sector's financial rewards.

Several studies show that rural communities have embraced a tourism-based economy so that they may become better their overall excellence of life and see tangible results in their communities (Simpson, 2008). Although the tourist sector has numerous good effects on the growth of both visitor-attractive places and local communities as well as the economy and infrastructure, it also has several negative consequences (Sharpley, 2002). There is a disconnect between the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of sustainability and its application in the real world (Collins, 1999).

While several writers have attempted to define sustainability, no one concept has gained widespread acceptance (Swarbrooke, 1998). In addition, sustainable tourism has economic benefits, and outweighs any potential environmental damage caused by visitors and operators (Cocccsis & Nijkamp, 1995).

In the 1980s, the idea of sustainable tourism emerged out of a desire to preserve popular tourist spots without sacrificing any of the industry's many positive side effects (Richards & Hall, 2000). The concept of Community Based Tourism (CBT) was first associated with the ecotourism in rural areas (Zapata et al., 2011), but it has since been applied to other types of tourism, such as those centered on food, art, and culture. The growing number of tourists, along with their participation and intervention in the tourism industry, has prompted discussion among international organizations about how to best provide environmental safeguards and foster responsible tourism growth (David, 2011).

To raise their level of life, rural communities all over the globe embraced tourism to diversify their economies (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). In rural regions, where employment opportunities are few and infrastructure is rudimentary at best, the tourism sector is a welcome exception (Borkotoky & Goswami, 2012). To minimize issues like misunderstanding between local rural populations and the destinations, sustainable tourism initiatives should be created locally and according to the needs and circumstances of the local destinations (Bowman, 2011).

A community is a collection of individuals who have established and maintained a mutually beneficial and trustworthy network of relationships among themselves (Dogra & Gupta, 2012). Current and potential inhabitants of a certain area are considered part of that community. Realize that the community you live in is a living, breathing system that is always changing. The term "community" is used to denote a collection of individuals who segment responsibility for making decisions and whose representatives may act on those decisions (Narsimmaraj, 2012).

As community development initiatives and community engagement in tourist development projects gained popularity after 1975 (United Nations), several tourism studies began to examine the impact of community involvement. In a variety of contexts and from a variety of international viewpoints, engagement in development processes is employed on a regular (Phuong, 2015). The MOA (Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability) model was conceptualized and has been useful in a diversity of circumstances, including studies of firm-level risk assessment and data sharing (Wu et al., 2004).

In order to understand how to encourage creativity and initiative in large organizations, Turner and Wensley (2014) used the MOA (Motivation Opportunity and Ability) model to study data distribution and administrative learning. The core idea of their model was to demonstrate how information is disseminated inside an organization, leading to breakthroughs in corporate-level innovation and, ultimately, a revolutionary shift in the status quo.

According to Bettman (1979), one's level of motivation determines both the course of action one takes and the intensity with which one pursues it. Communities need to be encouraged to take part in a process within a community-based framework (Milne &

Ewing, 2004). The insights of the host civic about the effects of tourism influence the community's overall attitude toward and enthusiasm for the industry (Byrd, 2003).

The benefits communities see because of tourism are vital in getting them involved in the tourist development process (Healy, 1994). Participants are more probable to be those who see personal advantages from tourism, rather than those who do not (Prenntice, 1993). Getz (1995) argued that the perceived individual and mutual advantages are the sole sources of engagement in the participation process for the partnership.

Opportunities in tourist planning refers to the process through which local community individuals have been intricate in the tourist progress process thanks to the efforts of tourism planners who have adopted a participatory approach. It is unrealistic to expect people to become involved in politics if they have no chance to do so in their own communities (Bahaire & White, 1999). Opportunities have a significant impact on people's propensity to participate, and opportunities themselves are very contextdependent. Many developing countries have fewer chances because of their authoritarian, paternalistic, and top-down bureaucratic governmental systems (Tosun, 2006). One of the factors preventing community members from becoming involved is a "Lack of Awareness" (Tosun, 2000).

According to Kayat (2002), the extent to which a community can take advantage of economic possibilities created by tourist growth is a function of the amount of involvement within that community. Those in a community who have greater financial resources are more likely to take part in the tourist development process than those who have less.

## **OBJECTIVES OF STUDY**

- To observe the level of community and citizen participation in tourist planning for the region.
- To investigate a better understanding of the government's, local political bodies', business operators, and residents' views on community-based tourist development.
- In order to put the M-O-A (Motivation, Opportunity, and Ability) model for community engagement to the test in the designated areas.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The local citizens of the possible destinations chosen for this research will serve as the unit of analysis, as their perceptions of the obstacles to community engagement will be analysed, and the role of M-O-A in community participation will be examined. Using a variety of search engines and access to the same types of research publications, such as academic journals, working papers, and reports, secondary data has been compiled concerning community-based tourism and sustainable tourism development. First-hand

information was gathered by means of the following methods. Some replies were collected during the semi-structured interviews with the participants' knowledge and consent. It is common practice in survey research to administer a set of questions, either verbally or in writing, to a statistically valid sample of the population. The research team used a questionnaire to gather primary information. The questionnaire was designed using a 7-point Likert scale, and it also gathered nominal data which was devoted to gathering demographic information. The 7-point scale ran from "1- Strongly Disagree" (1) to "7 - Strongly Agree".

## **ANALYSIS OF RESULTS**

The data in this study have been analysed using descriptive methods to look for patterns and trends. The current study uses statistical sampling to examine the distribution of demographic characteristics, including but not limited to respondent gender, level of education, employment, age, and level of engagement with the tourist industry. 73% of the responders were male, whereas just 27% were female. Males outnumber females in the sample, according to the frequency distribution of the specified locations in J&K State. This gender breakdown makes sense. These handpicked spots are in less-populated regions of J&K, where it is socially unacceptable for women to leave the house or interact with outsiders. Because of this, gathering data from the female respondents became more difficult. Nevertheless, considering the makeup of the research region, a female participation rate of 26% is respectable.

Responses were examined based on the level of respondents' education. In general, the more schooling one receives, the more informed and acquainted with the tourist system that person will be. How well-educated the residents of the chosen location are? The results showed that 26.4% of respondents had completed some college and 17.2% had completed graduate school. 22.9% of respondents had not completed the 10th grade. Therefore, there are varying degrees of education among the study's sample population in the sample locations.

The respondents were given no predetermined categories to use while answering the open-ended question about their employment. Later, these jobs were classified under related umbrellas. Analysis of respondent occupation data showed that 25% of respondents were farmers, 30% were students, 17.2% were government employees, 15.5% were shop owners, and 13.3% were classified as "other", which includes housewives and those doing private employment. The widely held respondents (35.9%) were between the ages of 20 and 40, while another 30.2% were amid the ages of 40 and 60, 24.5% were below the age of 20, and only 9.4% were beyond the age of 60. A whopping 64.3% of respondents in a survey of popular tourist spots in J&K State had no connection to the travel industry in any way. Presently, just 13% of respondents worked in the tourist industry directly, while 23.7% worked in the industry indirectly.

The identified respondents in a few preselected locations in the state of J&K filled out a questionnaire on the obstacles they face in being involved in their communities. Using a rotational component matrix, three underlying components for the latent construct "Barriers to Community Participation" were identified. Due to significant loadings on the components that correlate to centralization, lack of coordination, and lack of knowledge, factor 1 was dubbed "Operational Barriers". Due to significant loadings on items corresponding to professionals' attitudes, lack of competence, elite control, a lack of an acceptable legal framework, a comparatively high rate of community involvement, and a dearth of financial and human resources, the second factor was designated "Structural Barriers". Finally, low levels of knowledge, indifference, and people's limited resources all contributed to the third component, which was dubbed "Cultural Barriers".

In the first category, called Operational Barrier, there are seven subcategories. The detected variables have a standard deviation of 0.97, with "Representatives of locals are not becoming engaged in the policymaking process linked to tourism" having the highest mean value, at 6.61%. In addition, locals in the same areas believe their panchayat/representatives lack the authority to make decisions on tourist infrastructure expansion (Mean = 6.31, Standard Deviation = 0.84). They also believe that there is an avoidance strategy on the part of government officials who do not have any formal meetings with the local inhabitants (Mean = 5.88, Standard Deviation = 0.79) and that people do not work in conjunction with tourist development authorities (Mean = 5.96, Standard Deviation = 1.11). The locals overwhelmingly believe (Mean = 5.86, Standard Deviation = 0.63) that government officials are not interested in including local representatives in the tourist development process. When compared to the views of other locals, who believe that there is great cooperation between different Governments and non-Government entities about tourist development (Mean = 6.35, Standard Deviation = 1.12), this view of government personnel stands in stark contrast. On the other hand, locals believe that government authorities are misinformed about the attractions in their region (Mean = 4.41, Standard Deviation = 0.99).

In terms of the second element, Structural Barriers, there are ten variables to consider. People's perceptions of government officials were as follows: (Mean = 5.60, Standard Deviation = 1.18) officials believe they know best about the destination's tourism development; (Mean = 6.43, Standard Deviation = 0.76) officials do not take locals' suggestions seriously; and (Mean = 6.53, Standard Deviation = 0.93) officials do not provide locals with any training in the relevant areas. The locals believe that their destination is rich with untapped potential, but that the advantages of tourism are not reaching most of the population because of the nonexistence of education and exercise in the arena (Mean = 5.43, Standard Deviation = 0.95). In addition, they feel that there are not enough laws or institutions in place to support community involvement (Mean = 6.40, Standard Deviation = 1.17).

Cultural Barriers, the third component, are defined by three variables. The detected variable "We do not have adequate opportunity to engage in tourist development" had

the highest mean value of 6.63 (Standard deviation = 0.93). The local population has a negative perception of the policy created to promote tourism in their region (Mean = 6.43, Standard Deviation = 1.78) due to a lack of information. They also reported (Mean = 5.82, Standard Deviation = 0.69) that they did not know anything about the tourist product or the optimistic impacts that tourism needed on their community.

According to the descriptive statistics of the Motivation factor, locals have higher levels of motivation than those living in competing locations. The locals agree that tourism is beneficial to their towns' economies (Mean = 6.30, Standard Deviation = 1.18) and opens new markets for their goods (Mean = 6.35, Standard Deviation = 0.77). In addition, locals see tourism as a source of fresh revenue (Mean = 6.35, Standard Deviation = 1.54) and an economic diversifier (Mean = 6.20, Standard Deviation = 1.16). However, descriptive data suggested that inhabitants' motivation was rather low.

There seem to be greater possibilities for locals compared to those in other locations, as shown by descriptive statistics for the Opportunity factor. The average number of meetings each year is 6.60, with a standard deviation of 1.17. Residents felt that tourism authorities were helpful and friendly (Mean = 6.36, Standard Deviation = 1.19) and that their interests were being represented in tourist development (Mean = 6.33, Standard Deviation = 1.37) by these officials. However, locals complained that they were not given enough voice in policymaking forums by tourist authorities.

Ability was the third component of the MOA structure. Data analysis showed that locals are more capable than those in several other popular holiday spots. The locals have a deeper understanding of tourist development (Mean = 6.45, Standard Deviation = 1.26) and are more knowledgeable about the challenges it presents to their area (Mean = 5.65, Standard Deviation = 1.52). They also read more about the topic in the press (Mean = 5.50, Standard Deviation = 1.17) than before. However, it was shown that locals fared better than those from other destinations. The average (Mean) resident exposure to tourism-related news is 5.53; the standard deviation (S.D.) is 1.16. They are well-informed about tourism in general (Mean = 6.54, Standard Deviation = 0.93), tourists specifically (Mean = 6.58, Standard Deviation = 0.94), and the potential effects of tourism (6.54, Standard Deviation = 1.16) in their area. Residents have a high average and standard deviation of community knowledge (0.93 for standard deviation). In contrast, inhabitants' replies to the question "I know how I can assist in tourist development" were uniform among locations, with means ranging from 3.10 to 3.20.

## **CONCLUSION**

The research was carried out in many different J&K cities. The chosen locations are well-known for their tourist attractions. In terms of the kinds of touristy things that may be bought there, each of the places that have been chosen offers something a little bit different. All these areas have the potential to become well-known tourist hotspots. Despite their potential, not all these locations are reaping the advantages of tourist



growth to the same extent, as was discovered throughout the course of the research conducted on them. Research also shows that certain popular tourist spots are drawing a high number of visitors, while others are struggling to draw in enough guests.

## **FUTURE SCOPE**

The current research is limited in its ability to detect other types of obstacles since it solely examines J&K as a destination. Depending on the demographics and other factors at play in each area, localized obstacles may take on a variety of forms. The paradigm for identifying obstacles to community engagement may be applied to other areas, such as rural development, social welfare, and education.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

During the study's data analysis, several suggestions were apparent. The outcomes of this empirical research and the extensive literature evaluation provide a solid support for the study's recommendations. The research was carried out in five separate tourist hotspots in J&K, each of which offered a unique demographic profile, tourism offering, and geographical setting, as well as a varying degree of community involvement. The research provided a methodology for community involvement that may be applied to improve sustainable development in a vacation spot. Improved tourism has traditionally boosted the economy and living standards of developing countries. Despite tourism's long-held status as a money-maker, its unchecked, haphazard expansion has led to problems in many popular vacation spots. Problems such as uncontrolled visitor numbers, pollution from multiple sources, depletion of natural resources, disruption to native communities and traditions, hostility from area residents, and financial strain on destinations prompted the development of a solution-oriented model to address these issues and alleviate the burden on vacationers.

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