

## Chapter 57

# An Evaluation of the Attitudes and Perception of the Local Communities in Mysore Towards the Impacts of Tourism Development

**Nichola A Ramchurjee**

*University of Mysore, Mysore, India*

**Charles V Ramchurjee**

*Private Institution, Bronx, New York, USA*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This article describes how the attitudes and perception of residents can directly affect ecotourism development by changing the ability to generate income, employment and by improving the quality of life. This article identifies and assesses the impacts of ecotourism in the communities in Mysore, India. Ecotourism impact was measured by a 26 item scale measuring local residents' perceptions and attitudes. Data was collected using the questionnaire method with 221 randomly distributed questionnaires collected. This article reveals there was significant support to further tourism development since the residents perceived that there was increased investment in infrastructures and a higher quality of life, increased employment opportunities – especially for a population with deep roots in agriculture. Now, there was an increased chance for residents to explore other jobs in the tourism industry and improved pride in their cultures and traditions in the community. Furthermore, to ensure the success of tourism development, an increased amount of involvement and participation from local residents is pertinent.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2016), Travel and Tourism contribution to the world's GDP outpaced the global economy for the sixth consecutive year in 2016, rising to a total of 10.2% of world GDP (US\$7.6 trillion). The sector now supports 292 million employment positions corresponding to 1 in 10 jobs on the planet. Many countries depend on other industries such as agriculture for revenue generation. But, they have realized that agriculture alone would not provide substantial development and have searched for alternative sources of income to maintain development (Verbole, 2000). These countries, have turned to the tourism industry as an alternative source of income because agriculture or other primary traditional industries are showing a remarkable decline (Byrd, Bosley and Dronberger, 2009).

For tourism development to be successful and sustainable in any given region, it is essential to involve a wide-range of stakeholders including residents at the destination, government tourism organizations, tourism agents, promoters, and the tourists themselves (Vargas, et al., 2007; Ribeiro, Do Valle, and Silva, 2013; Imran, Khorshed, and Beaumont, 2014). Sustainable tourism development can only be achieved if all stakeholders are involved in the process (Byrd, Bosley and Dronberger, 2009). Sustainable tourism involves the communities in the planning phases in tourism (Choi and Sirakaya, 2005) and their involvement throughout the developmental stages. However, in most cases, 'tourism officials' make decisions pertaining to tourism management and development and often times those decisions are made in a manner perceived by the local community as not being reflective of community's interests and opinions (Beierle and Konisky 2000).

Local communities played a vital role in tourism management and development as they are the main players to provide a good environment for tourist to boost the number of tourist arrivals as well as improving their quality of life. According to Andereck and Nyaupane (2011), the local people of the area are known as 'service suppliers' and they are the focal point because they provide the accommodation, information, transformation, facilities and services for the sake of tourism development in their area. Community can be defined as a group of people living in the same place or having particular characteristics in common such as attitudes, interests, and goals. As stated by Brehm, Eusaneheaur and Krannich (2004), community can be declared as group of individuals living or working within the same geographic of residence.

It is crucial to understand how community development is linked to the ability of a community to improve and sustain tourism development. Local communities whose livelihoods depend on tourism play their roles in influencing the tourism development activities through organizing themselves at all levels to act more effectively in developing and fostering partnerships with the government. According to Kepe (2004), local communities must have the abilities to help their community in order to ensure they can gain the positive benefit from tourism development. As suggested from previous research, communities must work closely with all stakeholders in an effort to educate people about tourism development and its impacts. In order to assess the level of tourism development, a community can be any existing or potential network of individuals, groups and organizations that share or have the potential to share common concerns, interest and goals (Aref, Redzuan and Gill, 2010).

In less economically developed countries, multi-stakeholder collaboration is crucial to support entrepreneurship education and training and marketing innovation for small and medium-sized enterprises to assist with poverty alleviation and tourism development (Carlisle, Kunc, Jones, and Tiffin, 2013). In designing tourism development policies, it is crucial to account for the community's attitudes toward

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