THE IMMINENT FUTURE OF COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM
An authentic way of experiencing the world

Sandeep Kumar Walia and Pooja Choudhary

40.1 Introduction

Tourism has long been considered a leading sector and therefore one of the biggest income generators. Tourism has both contributed to the spread of COVID-19 and been dramatically impacted by it. Only the future will reveal how the current situation will shape and impact the industry. But, like old times, there is no doubt that calamities, pandemics and other issues only temporarily affect the tourism industry and it will be revived. Community-based tourism (CBT) is gaining popularity all over the world, as it is different from mass tourism. This type of tourism offers a connection with the local community. Coming back to the topic, when unpopular places quickly turn into famous tourist attractions, without any doubt it can lead to undesirable influences. That’s due to the fact that often big companies have control of these tourist destinations and use the money earned to invest somewhere else. They also charge money from tourists, which many people can’t afford and which also damages local businesses by transferring those earnings abroad. On the other hand, CBT makes the welfare of the local community the priority through responsible tourism, which gives visitors the chance to straightaway backup the financial prudence of the places they visit. CBT in a variety of tourism where local communities bring tourists into their communities, giving them insight into their culture. CBT is type of tourism in which local native communities invite tourists to understand and experience their traditions, festivals, local food, routines, culture and set of principles. CBT centres on the participation of the local people in the arrangement and upholding of tourism developments so that it can lead to a sustainable industry (Hall, 1996). The tourism industry depends on the local people’s involvement, by offering them roles in workforces or making them local businesspersons, and on the local community’s attitude towards tourists (Laws, 1995; Dann, 1996; Cole, 1997; Taylor and Davis, 1997).

CBT shows understandable similarities with wider community progress and participating arrangement philosophies, which also promote greater control of procedures by the community at the ground level (Ife, 1996). Community development can also be explained as constructing vigorous and sustainable communities founded on societal justice and shared admiration (Gilchrist, 2003). Hence, community development clearly aims to pull to pieces physical barricades to involvement of locals in decision making process and helps to find
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solutions for local problems. It is not simple to unearth the shades and layers that make an Indigenous culture so special, especially when you are a visitor. Nonetheless, CBT permits the local community to share their homes, promoting both the people and the tourism destination one is visiting. In the case of big companies offering tours, their viewpoints are usually shaped by the viewpoint of a foreigner with little contemplation given to those people who actually live there and accurately know the destination. Supporting CBT aids the endorsement of a supportable and authentic technique of looking at the world. This enables tourists and the host both feels lightly closer to one another and to this large world around us. When we talk about the topic of atmosphere and environment, CBT again stands as a winner. The accomplishment of knowing a destination through unhurried travel and employing public transportation, for instance, is healthier for the atmosphere than various other methods of traveling.

Consequently, CBT has been seen as an example of community welfare and development, driven by financial objectives and neo-liberal motivations, as opposed to ways of strengthening and social equality (Craig, 2003). CBT is the tourism of future, because it inspires both realistic and reliable experiences and absolutely impacts the local community and environment. CBT is often considered to be a stage for local people to get financial benefits through presenting their goods to tourists. It also improves the cultural and social benefits for the local people through socio-cultural exchanges with the tourists. This study advocates that, in the future, CBT can encourage profound associations between the host, and guest and it also can preserve the environment, culture, societies and livelihoods.

40.2 Community-based tourism

CBT requires a body to accomplish successful tourism as the local community will require a demonstrative group to interact with tour operators and various outside organizations in order to make arrangements with tourists. Generally speaking, CBT is an action that, with the help of improved local involvement, can deliver prevalent economic and other socio-cultural benefits and that gives decision-making control to local communities (The Mountain Institute, 2000). The Mountain Institute (TMI, 2000) states that CBT may be a guest-host communication that has evocative involvement by both the parties and produces financial and preservation assistance for local people and environments. For Sunasri, CBT is a kind of tourism that takes ecological, societal and cultural sustainability under contemplation. CBT is controlled and maintained by the local community, for the welfare of the community, with the intention of empowering guests to learn about the local community and natural ways of life (Suansri, 2003). Tamir (2015) determined that local control and possession is one in all the significant ideologies to the lasting functionality of CBT projects. On the other hand, Leksakundilok and Hirsch (2008) explained that CBT must be controlled and managed by the local community.

The guidelines of the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) mention that the term ‘community-based ecotourism’ is employed to explain ecotourism activities that are categorized by immense environmental attention, amplified control in the hands of local people and increased participation of the local residents. This idea is evidently notable as compared to other tourism endeavours that are mostly strategized and accomplished by companies that are outsiders and that produce insignificant assistance for the local community (Manu & Kuuder, 2012). The aim of CBT schemes is to ensure that affiliates of the local communities have a lot of control over the happenings in their native place and a chief amount of
the monetary benefits (Scheyvens, 2002). CBT can be considered an exceptional, participatory tourism model that proposes schemes to create realistic and long-lasting benefits for a big segment of stakeholders that reside both within and outside the community. CBT is also considered a unique form of tourism because it has characteristics that are very much dissimilar to usual mass-tourism practices. Organizations dealing with CBT need to completely comprehend the fundamental norms, ideas, philosophies and mechanisms behind it. CBT is not just a type of tourism whose purpose is to maximize the earnings for stakeholders. Rather, it is a type of tourism that is very much worried about the influences of the tourism business on the local community and environment. CBT arises from a community-based development approach, which uses tourism activities as an instrument to toughen the authority of the rural community that manages tourism resources in a destination.

Although CBT is an ideal solution for the various problems and challenges of the community, it cannot be considered a marvellous cure or a saviour that can save the community from all the ill-effects of tourism. The type of tourism that ensures that the community has a job goes by a number of names; ‘Community-Based Ecotourism’ (CBET), ‘Community-Based Tourism’, ‘Agrotourism’, ‘Homestay’, ‘Ecotourism’ and ‘Adventure Tourism’ are some of the popular terminologies. Academics all over the world have been trying to define CBT but there is no agreement or harmony among the various viewpoints they have presented so far. Hence, it is concluded that CBT ensures social, financial, environmental and cultural sustainability. CBT is also owned, managed, performed and arranged by the community, for the welfare of the community, with the aim of offering visitors the chance to extend their knowledge and find out about the local community and native traditions.

40.3 CBT as a catalyst for future opportunities

Usually, in CBT, the key decision-related powers stay with travel agents or tour operators, who obviously collect a majority of the money generated from the tourism activity. Due to this, it is very clear that the likely socio-economic benefits of CBT will be persistently restricted until and unless the financial matters of the tourism industry and power relations among stakeholders are discussed at the global level. CBT is very closely linked to rural areas; a visit to rural places can be considered a distinguishing feature. In various popular cities located in countries like the United States of America, European countries and Dubai many Indigenous communities have been adversely affected due to capitalism and urban development. Because of its unique features, CBT is considered less erudite. This should not be considered a weak point but can be one amongst its various other benefits.

Hence, CBT must ensure the participation of local people and should promote social equality and social justice. Tourism activities must be authorized by local communities for the sole benefit of the community. Lastly, CBT should essentially contribute towards the conservation and sustenance of the local environment, traditions, culture and businesses of communities, by considering the social, cultural, economic and environmental influences of hosts and guests. There are various types of tourism, which makes it obligatory to draw lines and borders of what is and what’s not a particular type of tourism. In order to ensure huge community participation, communities must be well-versed and informed about why they should trust the tourists. The tourism management has to be transparent and there must be accountability in all the dealings. This means that members of the community must have the authority to check any or all of the transactions and business records, whenever they wish to.

Local communities need to be educated about their rights and errands and also to be fully
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informed about their rights and prerogatives. For commercial benefits, the local communities should obtain good and effective people on the basis of the experience and educational qualifications.

CBT projects don’t usually include suitable tourism services for creating income. A lot of CBT activities depend on creating accommodations or arrangements, which are capital dependent and require regular maintenance. Endangered zones increasingly depend on finance obtained from visitors to invest in conservation initiatives. The local people frequently need to depend on the preservation projects for money. There’s an absence of considering the need for arranging commercial events. Local people should essentially sell handicrafts, local food, local accommodation and the beauty of nature and cultural experiences to the tourists. This can be the done to make sure that there is sufficient income of preservation-related funds. There are various prospects for social economy enterprises under CBT. The method of enabling CBT should be participatory from the beginning to facilitate ownership for the community and to manage and activities related to CBT.

The local community must create standards and monitor regularly that everything is as per requirements and whether the CBT is able to attain the set objectives. The organizations in charge must monitor all the activities for this purpose. If there are clear aims and objectives for the community, it will be easy to evaluate the CBT project efficiently. It is also need of the hour to comprehend CBT and to understand the issues and challenges connected with creating a new CBT project. In other words, investigate the attitudes of key local stakeholders regarding the idea of the formation of CBT. Consideration to such issues could subsidize a more equitable and sustainable tourism industry. There is need to provide guidance to tourism planners, private players, non-government organizations (NGOs) and local communities in determining if CBT would work for a particular community. There is no doubt that modern tourists are very much interested in getting involved in an authentic experience to create real change in this world.

40.4 Conclusion

Contributors and policymakers should reorganize policies that support the capacities, capitals and environments of small, community-oriented family businesses, along with a sturdier positioning in the direction of the local markets. The researchers should concentrate on illuminating the impacts of CBT by power relations instead of recognizing instruments to dissolve power. Future research should concentrate on in-depth studies on local residents in order to smoothen the alleyway for CBT to ensure sustainable management of protected areas. CBT can also be seen as an umbrella term that incorporates social, cultural and environmental sustainability; the involvement of local people; distribution of benefits; social justice and control of local people over the tourism sector. It also advocates that tourism activities ideally should be sustainable in nature so that the host community does not have to face various contemporary issues. An important question which needs be answered is, ‘Can CBT contribute to sustainable development?’ Additional research is required to see the undercurrents of the cooperative policy networks and the quintessentially sustainable tourism projects, which have the power to put the local communities at the center of the tourism processes. CBT allows tourists to embark on an adventure that is a combination of stunning landscapes and cultural heritage.

In the end, it can be concluded that, with the help of sustainable community development and the bottom-up method, CBT withholds the power to significantly support local residents because it gives a sense of authority to the local community regarding development and
management processes. CBT based on local initiatives can have a long life, make quick progress and have many constructive benefits for the local economy. CBT managers and planners need to be sensitive and better equipped to understand the complexities of local lives and to choose an appropriate strategy for targeting various concerns of the local community, which will eventually increase local support. CBT will become a symbol of an all-inclusive and complete method for attaining sustainable development in coming times, as it is the need of the hour to be responsible towards nature and local communities. If adopted correctly, CBT can prove to be the way for salvation in the highly materialistic and profit-oriented tourism industry by empowering the individuals who live in a tourism destination. CBT is definitely going to be one of the ways to generate a more maintainable and sustainable tourism industry. Hence, researchers across the globe need to pay attention to understand the benefits and challenges of CBT.

References


