Local Participation Level and Empowerment in Community-Based Tourism : A Theoretical Survey

Khem Kumar Gautam [†]

Abstract

Bringing communities onboard the flying-high tourism ship arose along-with the benign environmentalism of the post structural era. However, the issues of socio-economic justice and environmentalism conceived in a way that it was better off with community participation turns out naïve unless the real stakeholders are on the top notch of the decision-making process. The participation level of a community's stakeholders in a community-led tourism model and how it relates with community empowerment is discussed.

Keywords : community tourism, citizen participation, tourism cost and benefits, environmentalism, community empowerment

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in modern days is ever expanding and the evolution in its trend is turning into more individualistic, flexible in nature than from the mass form of tourism at its inception. The human gaze into off the beaten tracks and to the next edge of the earth was never more than what it is at present (Fennel D.A., 2015). When we delve into the tourism literature, it's rather easy to conclude that monotonously tiresome cosmopolitan work-living life style has led to evolve tourism to explore more remoteness in the landscapes and remote communities to immerse oneself into their diversities. To escape (Sharpley R., 2015) from one's own social and work life into 'others' all and in search of authenticity (MacCannell D., 1973; Cohen E., 1988; Pearce P.L. & Moscardo G.M, 1986) in values and cultures, and while in doing so, one may find himself or herself nostalgic of

their history of community rural life-tourists are turning into enchanting community in search of their ancestral reflection. Such an intrinsic but evolving human tendency to see the unseen and experience the unexperienced is bringing tourists into the communities today. And alongside, as Murphy（1985 & revised edition, 2004）emphasized the business potentials of the communities overwhelmed by tourism with fair level of participation and skills of management- investment in community tourism with the highest possible participation by the local hosts has been loudly and clearly stressed in the tourism literature.

Nevertheless, the Community upturn of tourism can be both boon and bane as expressed in tourism literature especially on four core dimensions such as socio-cultural, economic, biophysical environment and local empowerment（Nunkoo R. & Ramkisson H., 2011; Wearing S. & McDonald M., 2002; Stronza A & Gordillo J., 2008; Stone L.S & Stone T.M., 2011; Tylor G., 1995; Mitchell R.E. & Reid D.G., 2001; Kontogeorgopoulos N, 2005; Scheyvens R., 2000; Cole S., 2007; Simons I. & Grool E., 2015）. Tourism researchers almost unanimously support the fact that developing tourism activities in communities may not realize its socio-economic and environmental sustainability goals unless the host community members are on the decisive position to influence on policy decisions and almost all environmentalists and community/developmental workers may agree with the enticing fact that the role of tourism host community members must come first among all business interest groups with regard to tourism business planning and overall management decision making for its long-term project viability and environmental sustainability（Reid D.G, et.al., 2004; Claudia J., 1997; Lankford S.V. & Howard, D.R., 1994; Lankford S.V., 1994）. Because tourism cannot sustain in a community if the host are hostile and unsupportive of its activities（Reid D.G, et.al., 2004; Claudia J., 1997; Lankford S.V. & Howard, D.R., 1994; Lankford S.V., 1994; Ap J., 1992; Faulkener B. & Tideswell C., 1997; Tosun C. & Timothy D.J., 2003; Ap J. & Crompton J., 1998; Liu J. et.al, 1987; Choi H.C. & Shirakaya E., 2005）. Murphy（1985: p.120）writes "To maximize the socio-economic development potential and minimize the discontent and out-migration of the young requires a broader community involvement in the industry and its rewards. Such involvement will require the support of residents because how they react to proposed developments and social impact of many visitors will be the key to the hospitality atmosphere of a destination".

So, if the community engagement in full swing is the prerequisite for successful community tourism, their level of participation-from non-participation to the level of citizen control (Arnstein, 1969) and how this relates to community empowerment (Rocha E.M., 1997; Scheyvens R., 2000) is investigated in this paper browsing the literature on community-based tourism. For this objective, it is presumed as mandatory to elaborate on the terms like community participation and empowerment in the following sections.

Ⅰ. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM

The host community participation in tourism is well articulated in the tourism literature as being essential from its planning to implementation and management even though, one of the fundamental challenges for any community projects, including tourism, is to bring on board the divergent sects and groups of people together for a common good. Drake (1991: 132, cited in Fennell, 2013) defined local participation as "the ability of local communities to influence the outcome of development projects, such as ecotourism, that have an impact on them, and suggested a model of local participation in the development of ecotourism projects" (1991: 149-155). His model listed nine phases of local participation. In phase one, the role of local participation in the proposed project is determined; the research team is selected in phase two; preliminary studies are conducted in phase three; the level of local involvement and then an appropriate participation mechanism are determined in phases four and five; in phase six, dialogues and educational efforts are initiated; in phase seven, a collective decision-making is performed; phase eight involves the development of an action plan and an implementation scheme; and phase nine comprises monitoring and evaluation.

As Millar and Aiken (1995: 62, cited in Hall, 2007: 249) observed, "Communities are not the embodiment of innocence; they are complex and self-serving entities, as much driven by grievances, prejudices, inequalities, and struggles for power as they are united by kinship, reciprocity, and interdependence". The social hierarchies and complexities make some get better advantages while other are deprived of it the basic. The interests of the lower-class people in the hierarchy might be superseded by that of the elite's interests and priorities when it comes to projects benefits although the costs are shared among all equally as tourism brings with it as much costs/impacts as it brings benefits

to the local (Reed, 1997; Reid et.al., 2004; Choi & Shirakaya, 2005; Lankford, 1994; Lankford & Howard, 1994; Liu et. al., 1987; Ap & Crompton, 1998). Rocharungsat (2004: 79) concluded that it is unrealistic to imagine that communities will always be able to successfully and independently implement all stages of community-based tourism, as they juggle among marketing, hospitality, conservation, and evaluation (as cited in Fennell, 2013). Nevertheless, if all stakeholders are serious in their hopes to realize a successful sustainable model of a community based tourism, the goal of a strong empowered community must be shared among themselves.

However, researchers point to the barriers to the community participation in tourism as a roadblocks and difficulties to sidestep them. Tosun (2000 and 2006) identified basically three operational, structural and cultural limits to local participation in tourism and the conflicting vested interests across the stakeholders which eventually leads to varied nature of participation attitudes and level; whereby, Reed (1997) doubts of any intervening independent convener to convene to differences in power relations across the stakeholders. Blackstock (2005) rejects the community participation in tourism development trajectory because it has totally drifted from the community transformative intent and being too naïve to the community multiplicity and structural barriers. And she adds, "…instead CBT focuses on maximizing the economic stability of the industry through legitimating tourism development as locally controlled and in the community's interest". In a community impact research brought about by tourism in Australia's Gold Coast, Faulkner & Tideswell (1997) observed an altruistic surplus phenomenon whereby the community residents tolerate any downside effects of tourism for the community-wide benefits and refrain from any antagonistic activities, contrary to the Doxey[1] scenario whatsoever. After ascertaining some extrinsic/intrinsic dimensions such as stages of tourism development, tourist/resident ratio, type of tourist, seasonality, involvement, socioeconomic characteristics, residential proximity and period

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[1] Doxey (1975) explained the host-guest interaction in his irridex model whereby the interaction passes through four phases; namely, Euphoria, Apathy, Annoyance and Antagonism. Euphoria, an initial phase of tourism development where visitors and investors are welcomed by the host community; in second stage, Apathy, visitors are taken for granted and contacts between hosts and visitors and commercial; in third stage, Annoyance, is a saturation point, hosts have misgivings about tourism, policy makers attempt solutions via increasing infrastructures rather than limiting its growth. And final stage is Antagonism, where irritations are openly expressed, visitors seen as causes of all problems, promotion increased to offset deteriorating reputation of destination.

of residence. The benefits of tourism were recognized in relation of the full range of its potential impacts and developed a resilience which enables impacts to be accommodated. The participants might experience some changes like gaining skills, heightened self-esteem, expanded networks of support and better organizational capacity as positive and restrictions on time and erosion of reciprocity and other traditional relationships and conflicts as negative while participating in tourism as identified by Stronza & Gordillo (2008); while in a sharp contrast, Wearing and McDonald (2002) cautioned that local languages and traditional practices of the tourism destination might be vulnerable to the dominant western mode of management practices that view tourism destination as an interactive space between tourist and host where tourists are a part of the system rather than central element. They further question "under what conditions can CBT strike a balance between conservation and development, between the old forms of knowledge and the new"?

The participation processes in the CBT may be further complicated by some internal issues in the community such as complex and 'nested' system of host and physical environments as well as structure/scope of implementation and collaborations processes as underscored by Jamal & Stronza (2009) and Stone & Stone (2011). Reid & Mitchell (2001) observed how community integration on Taquile Island, Peru led to greater socio-economic benefits for most residents. It acted as a social catalyst to create awareness about tourism opportunities, to take control of community resources and plan and develop to benefit from the global ebb and flow of tourism in todays globalized world. They wrote, "If residents of destination communities were more thoroughly integrated in tourism planning and management on a relatively equitable basis, they would also be more inclined to protect the natural and cultural resources that sustain their livelihood". Kontogeorgopoulos (2005) concluded, while investigating on the community-based ecotourism in Phuket, southern Thailand that certain tradeoffs such as-success and survival at the expense of ecotourism's spatial isolation and structural independence; local employment and benefits at the expense of local initiation and control; social status and mobility at the expense of social cohesion and harmony; and incipient environmentalism at the expense of ecological sustainability existed for the partial success of CBT. Nonetheless, he added, the benefits outweighed the costs in terms of community development.

Ⅱ．PARTICIPATION LEVEL IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND THE LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Arnsteins（1969）developed a typology of citizen participation citing the examples of US federal social programs on a ladder pattern that has eight rungs and each rung move upward from bottom level manipulation to top, citizen control. The other rungs in her ladder/gradation include: therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership and delegated power where she mentioned "each rung corresponding to the extent of citizens' power in determining the end product". As her explanations of each rungs or level of the typology the participation process of the lowest rungs; manipulation and therapy describe the non-participation level where the intention is not to allow for real participation but to 'educate and cure' the powerless to help enable powerholders. Rungs third and fourth explain tokenism so, although the citizens may have some voice to say, they lack the power to change the status quo. The sixth rung, placation is also a tokenism with the powerholders retaining the power to decide on their favor. Further up the ladder, partnership enables some negotiation and engages in tradeoffs with traditional powerholders. The topmost rungs, delegated power and citizen control allow the powerless citizen to obtain majority of decision-making or managerial power.

The actual participation level is a fundamental issue in CBT when it is meant to reach a conclusion on benefits and costs. Very few, if any, contemporary researches are found to have had dwelt on to investigate on the actual participation level of host citizen in the CBT activities. This study aims to identify the level of citizen participation equating the Arnstein's explanations of the typology with the CBT participation process in a community setting and to explore how it relates to the community empowerment. Before moving on, it is deemed as necessary to elaborate on empowerment and its dimensions.

Ⅲ．EMPOWERMENT AND ITS DIMENSIONS

Different authors on empowerment studies defined it as a process at which both individual and community groups act to gain mastery and control over their lives, and a critical understanding of their changing socio-political environment（Rappaport, 1987;

Zimmerman et. al., 1992; Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995; Wallerstein & Bernstein, 1994; Speer & Hughey, 1995）. Rappaport （1987） describes "empowerment conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights. It is a multilevel construct applicable to individual citizens as well as to organizations and neighborhoods" and it includes the development of skills necessary to participate effectively in community decision making, and comprises elements of self-esteem, a sense of causal importance, and perceived efficacy （Kieffer, 1984; cited in Zimmerman et. al., 1992）. Wallerstein adds it embodies an interactive process of change, where institutions and communities become transformed, as people who participate in changing them become transformed. Zimmerman extended the theoretical model of psychological empowerment into intrapersonal, interactional and behavioral components where intrapersonal empowerment is about how people think of their capacity to influence social and political as well as difficulties associated with trying to control over community problems; interactional empowerment refers to the transactions between persons and environments that enable one to successfully master social or political systems and the behavioral component is about the specific actions one takes to exercise influence on the social and political environment through participation in community organizations and activities. Unlike participation process, empowerment process itself is a condition （capacity） and process （Timothy, 2015） and multidimensional in its manifest. This has been summarized as in the table below:

Table 1　Dimensions of Empowerment

Degrees of Empowerment	Scales of Empowerment	Forms of Empowerment	Ladder of Empowerment
○　Imposed development ○　Tokenistic ○　Involvement ○　Meaningful participation and ○　Empowerment	○　National ○　Local/community ○　Personal Empowerment	○　Political ○　Social ○　Economic ○　Psychological	○　Atomistic Individual Empowerment ○　Embedded Individual Empowerment ○　Mediated Empowerment ○　Socio-political Empowerment ○　Political Empowerment

（Rocha, 1997; Scheyvens, 2000; Timothy, 2007）.

The degrees of empowerment evolve as in the same path as Arnsteins (1969) citizen participation ladder path in a linear path. The scales of empowerment evolve from personal level through to National and the forms of empowerment are four distinct manifestations of empowerment in psychological, economic social and political areas.

In ladder of empowerment, Rocha (1997) explained the variation in empowerment in a ladder pattern like in Arnseins participation ladder. In Atomistic individual empowerment, an individual is affected solitarily while in embedded individual empowerment, the individual is embedded in a larger structure or participates in an organizational context. Mediating empowerment is the empowerment through expert's role/knowledge on behalf of the community/beneficiaries. Socio-political empowerment focuses on the process of change in a community locus in the context of collaborative struggle to alter the socio-political and economic relations. And finally, the political empowerment is a political action process directed toward the institutional change. In this, the focus is not on the process of change within individual or group but on the outcome for example in education, housing, employment, government benefits, health care.

Ⅳ. LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN A COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM AND EMPOWERMENT

Participation is essential for community members to understand tourists and tourism processes, and make informed decisions for their future course of actions (Cole, 2007) but mere focus on the economic viability of the projects, rather than the transformative emancipatory intent (Blackstock, 2005) limits the empowering process of the community. Hall (2007) criticizes Murphy's influential model of community participation in tourism as it being failed to address the power distribution and participation issues. He cited Connelly & Richardson (2004) having been downplaying the 'over-romanticizing' of collective capacity of the community decision making process when exclusion of some stakeholders was necessary for practical consensus. Taylor (1995: p. 487) attacked 'Murphy's friendly community' as an 'advertising hyperbole' and wrote: "The control of tourism by players within the community and the pressure to increase visitor numbers could seed to widen community differences as well as creating another

destination stereotype". He further added, "The promise of hospitality and the chance to share the private world of local people seek to define the community in ways which can surely have no legitimization".

As Stone & Stone (2011: pp.97-114) cited Goodwin (2006) that a study of CBT by International Centre for Responsible Tourism at Leeds Metropolitan University, concluded the failure of the community based projects because of some lacking such as: understanding of the need for commercial activities; engagement with the private sector, e.g. travel agents, tour operators and hoteliers; location, poor people to benefit, tourists must stay in or near to these communities; CBT projects do not always provide appropriate tourism facilities for generating income and protected areas increasingly rely on money from tourists to pay for conservation initiatives. However, some of the complexities in the community destinations in relation to the host visitor and resource management issues (Stronza & Jamal, 2009) could be minimized with integrated community without individualism and exogenous factors to community (Mitchell & Reid, 2001). Even though the tradeoff that Kontogeorgopoulos (2005) observed between psychological and social empowerment as well as economic and political empowerment is something to be researched in wider contexts for general validity and to extrapolate the result, the hegemonic interactive tourism space (Wearing & McDonald, 2002) in community settings might be more of a cost in terms of traditional culture, knowledge and language. Or, else community tourism will be much like a Pandora's Box (Simons & Groot, 2015) with nothing but hope left open.

CONCLUSION

The wide accolades of community tourism thought to be concomitant with environmental enlightenment as well as social justice could not be viewed as benign in the real-world scenarios as it sounded with its propagators in the literature. Considerable flip-side of it such as heightened costs to benefits are mirrored in cases where the stakeholders are sidelined by either local elites or external powerholders who have real control over tourism either financially or in terms of human resources and management decision making. The community perception of increased benefits to costs are reflected in those cases where the local could have better access to resources and total control

over tourism in their localities along with increased stakeholder participation in the decision-making process. Certainly, the trade-off issues and community integrity in mature tourism destinations may be a midway path to the cost benefits scenarios of scaling. Nonetheless, community empowerment is when all that must live with tourism are on top of the decision-making body that decides on the future they are destined to.

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