

A Study on Community Involvement in Tourism Benefit Sharing in Sri Lanka with Special Reference to Dambulla

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The level of local community involvement in tourism will result in more benefits to livelihood having a strong rapport between the local community and tourism industry. Active participation is important to gain benefits from tourism activities otherwise community involvement can be a disturbance to tourism development in the area. This research mainly focused to identify tourism benefits, how the community involves sharing benefits, and to identify challenges, issues while observing community expectations to enhance community involvement in tourism benefits sharing. The study utilized a qualitative methodology underpinned phenomenology research approach with 13 community members in Dambulla in Sri Lanka. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were carried out to gather primary data and the collected data were transcribed and analysed manually using thematic analysis and micro-interlocutor analysis. According to the findings of the study, there were more economic benefits than the other benefits generated through the tourism industry in the area. Further, the huge involvement of the community was shown as employment opportunities. There were some challenges and issues faced by the community and expectations such as the need for awareness programs, development of infrastructure facilities required to assure better sharing tourism benefits. Build-up more business opportunities, continue awareness and training programs, usage of environment-friendly transportation methods, the participation of host community leadership to the decision-making process can be mentioned as recommendations of the study. For future research, factors affecting on community livelihood through tourism activities, factors affecting the perception of the host community towards cultural tourism preservation and promotion in the cultural triangle can be recommended.

Keywords: Tourism benefits, Community involvement, Challenges and issue, Expectations