Community Participation in Tourism Development

- A Case Study of Malpe Tourism Area of Karnataka State

Executive Summary

The local people in Malpe have considered involvement in the decision-making process as a suitable way of involving the local community in tourism development. The findings of this study have revealed that local people themselves wish to take part actively in the decision-making process and wish to have a voice when decisions are made (they want active participation). Local people overwhelmingly stated that ‘taking part actively in the tourism decision-making process’ is an appropriate way of involving the local community in tourism development. This was overall the most accepted option by all local people.

According to them, a suitable form of decision-making would be one that involves both elected officials and appointed officials. But before making such decisions, they should first consult the local people so as to collect public views.

The local people generally did not feel involved in the current decision-making process. But the leaders claimed that they also involve local people in tourism related decisions.

Local people in the study area also considered involvement in the sharing of tourism benefits as a suitable way to involve the local community in tourism development. The businesses operating in the study area have schemes that favorably benefit local people through approaches such as employing locally, building local capacity and contributions to village development initiatives. There was a general perception among local people that those living in areas close to the main road have access to more tourism benefits that those in areas far from the main road.
The findings have revealed that tourism development in Malpe is contributing positively towards poverty alleviation. However, local people in the study area generally observed significant contributions to accessibility (transport and communication) and the prices of goods and services. There was a general feeling among local people that tourism development in the study area contributes significantly towards improving the livelihood of those living in areas close to the main road but contributes less to improving the livelihood of those in areas far from the road. The contribution of tourism on accessibility and on prices of goods and services, for example, was easily noticed by local people because both of them are tangible. Additionally, it was unlikely for them to associate such improvement with any other sector given that tourism is regarded as a very important economic activity in Malpe particularly in activities such as tour operations, shops, and handcraft sales. On the other hand, tourism did not seem to improve incomes and the general life of farmers, who are the majority in the study area and also constituted the largest proportion of survey respondents. In addition, local people mainly based their assessment of the contribution of tourism development to the general quality of life and household incomes on one factor, employment creation. This shows that the local people have some knowledge of the positive impact of tourism development. It also reinforces the argument that tourism will contribute to poverty reduction if it creates new jobs and provides incomes.

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