

Sustainable Tourism Development Through Community Engagement

A Study on the Role of Local Communities in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Sustainable tourism development is a crucial idea in the worldwide tourist sector, emphasizing the balanced integration of environmental, economic, and cultural aspects. This thesis examines the essential role that local communities play in promoting sustainable tourism development within the specific context of Bangladesh. This research seeks to examine the impact of community participation on the sustainability of the tourist industry. Its objective is to provide valuable insights and suggestions to policymakers, stakeholders, and practitioners who are active in determining the future of tourism in the nation. This study investigates the impact of community participation on the development of sustainable tourism. Data was collected from many stakeholders, including locals, tourist authorities, and industry experts, using a mix of surveys, journal articles, online searches, book readings, and documentary analysis. The theoretical component of the thesis focused on the pivotal role that local communities play in the development of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh.

24 respondents belonging to the possible sites provided data, and important self-administrative questionnaires as well as a corresponding comparative article analysis were carried out. Weak infrastructure, few lodging options, and low levels of community awareness were identified as the main obstacles to sustainable development. Locals' positive attitudes toward tourism development and willingness to welcome visitors, fair infrastructure availability, and rich eco-tourism potential were identified as the main opportunities. The thesis described how the innovative idea of sustainable community tourism was progressively introduced in several communities within a constrained scope and how it still managed to have a notable impact on the way of life and means of subsistence for the local populace. 70.8% of respondents thought that private business owners and government officials could build a value chain that contributes to the socio-economic advancement of those rural regions.

Language: English

Key Words: Community Tourism, Sustainability, Impacts, and Challenges

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background of Study

Community involvement in the realm of sustainable tourism entails the active participation of local communities in the decision-making process and the deliberate integration of their viewpoints and requirements into the formulation of tourist development strategies. By including communities, they are empowered to actively participate in the tourist sector, resulting in a feeling of ownership and accountability for the sustainable preservation of resources and cultural heritage. The focus is on promoting sustainable and ethical tourism practices that prioritize the long-term preservation of the environment and culture, while also benefiting local people and ensuring high-quality experiences for visitors (Howlader, 2023).

The sustenance of an increasing portion of the worldwide populace relies on the ongoing sustainability of the tourism business, which has become a burgeoning sector in many national economies. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) study indicates that the number of international tourists reached an unprecedented 1.5 billion in 2019, representing a 4% increase compared to the previous year. This growth has been consistent for a decade, starting in 2009 (United Nations World Trade Organization, 2020). In 2018, tourist income from global locations reached a staggering US\$ 1.7 trillion, marking a growth of over 4% compared to the previous year (UNWTO, 2019).

In terms of absolute numbers, Bangladesh ranked 153rd in the world in 2021 with a total of 135,000 tourists. Bangladesh generated over 273.00 million US dollars in revenue from tourism alone in 2021. This is equivalent to 0.059 percent of its GDP and almost 2 percent of all international tourism earnings in South Asia. (World Data Info, 2021)

According to Figure 1, tourism in 1995 produced a total of 25.00 million USD, which accounts for about 0.066 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP). Presently, the country's dependence on tourism has considerably increased compared to 26 years ago. Prior to the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, sales amounted to \$391.00 million, which accounted for 0.11 percent of the GDP.

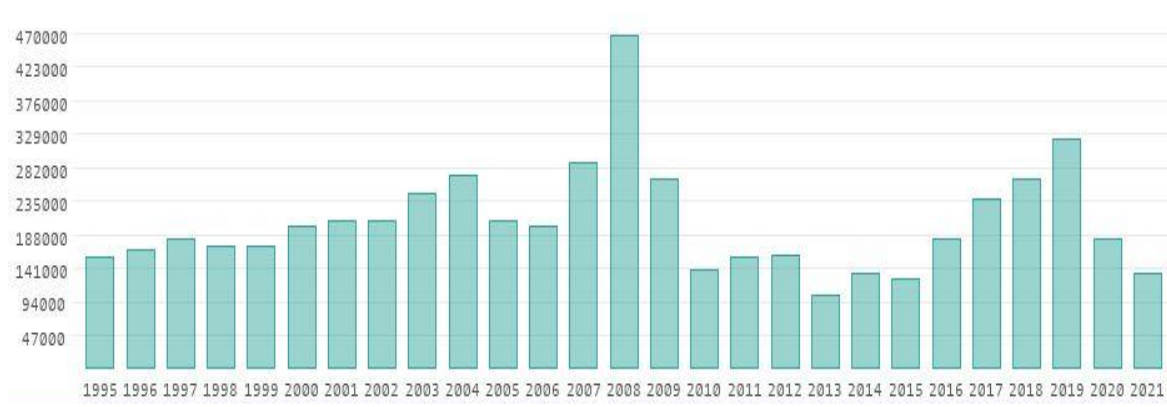


Figure 1: Bangladesh's tourist industry's earnings from 1995 to 2021 (World Data Info, 2021)

The COVID-19 outbreak caused a significant decline in tourism income in 2020. Only \$217.90 million remained out of the initial \$391.00 million (2019). There has been a 44% decrease in Bangladesh.

The research "Sustainable Tourism Development through Community Engagement: A Study on the Role of Local Communities in Bangladesh" seeks to examine the correlation between sustainable tourist development and the active participation of local communities in Bangladesh. The research is expected to examine how local communities influence, contribute to, and gain from tourist operations, while also assuring the long-term sustainability of the tourism sector in terms of the environment, society, and economy.

1.2 Importance of Study

The study's ability to provide light on sustainable tourism and community development makes it significant. In order to help policymakers, tourism experts, and community leaders in Bangladesh create a more equitable, sustainable, and inclusive tourist industry, this research will examine the ways in which local communities are engaged in the tourism business. The results may shed light on how to help local communities overcome the obstacles they encounter while embracing tourism, building on their strengths.

1.3 Research Problem and Objectives

This master's thesis will focus on the study subject of how local people in Bangladesh may actively participate in and make valuable contributions to the sustainable development of tourism. The primary aims of this research encompass:

1. To analyze the impacts of tourism on local communities in Bangladesh.
2. To explore the cultural implications of tourism on community identity and heritage preservation.
3. To investigate the extent of community participation in tourism-related decision-making processes.
4. To identify challenges and barriers that hinder effective community engagement in sustainable tourism development.

1.4 Research Questions

The study's objectives include answering the following research questions:

1. How does tourism impact the conditions of local communities in Bangladesh?
2. How can local communities actively contribute to environmental conservation and sustainable tourism practices?
3. What are the key challenges and barriers that hinder effective community engagement in sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh?

1.5 Scope and Limitations

The research specifically examines the contribution of local communities to the development of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. This research endeavors to provide extensive perspectives, although it is subject to some constraints, such as the limited availability of data and the possible difficulties in reaching isolated or neglected groups. Furthermore, the ever-changing nature of the tourist business and its interaction with many external variables might potentially impact the results of the research. Although there are limits, the research aims to provide a valuable addition to the comprehension and advancement of sustainable tourism by involving the local population in Bangladesh.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Differences between Community Tourism and Traditional Tourism

By actively engaging with and benefiting local communities, community tourism, also known as community-based tourism (CBT), is a tourist method. In community-based tourism, members of the local community take an active role in creating, promoting, and directing tourist attractions and events. By preserving and showcasing the unique characteristics of the community, community tourism aims to benefit local individuals economically, socially, and culturally.

Community tourism, or community-based tourism (CBT), is a tourist technique that actively engages and brings advantages to local communities. Community-based tourism is a kind of tourism that involves the active participation of the local community in the process of planning, developing, and managing tourist activities. The main objective of community tourism is to enhance the economic, social, and cultural empowerment of local citizens, while simultaneously maintaining and highlighting the distinctive attributes of the community (Gallagher, 2021).

This approach seeks to create sustainable and responsible tourism by fostering meaningful interactions between visitors and residents, minimizing negative environmental impacts, and ensuring a more equitable distribution of the economic benefits generated by tourism. Community tourism often emphasizes authenticity, local participation, and the creation of mutually beneficial relationships between tourists and the host community (Intrepid).

On the other hand, traditional tourism refers to the conventional and established patterns of travel and leisure activities that have been prevalent for many years. In this form of tourism, individuals or groups of tourists typically visit popular destinations, often characterized by well-known attractions and amenities. Traditional tourism is often associated with mass tourism, where large numbers of visitors travel to iconic destinations, and services are standardized to cater to a broad audience. In traditional tourism, the administration and decision-making procedures are often centralized, resulting in little participation from local people. Although traditional tourism has had a considerable impact

on the global travel industry, there is an increasing acknowledgment of the need for more sustainable and responsible tourist practices to tackle the environmental, cultural, and social issues connected with its conventional methods (Forgeard, 2023).

Table 1. Differences between community tourism and traditional tourism (Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2018)

Aspect	Community Tourism	Traditional Tourism
Community Involvement	Actively involves local communities in decision-making and management.	Limited involvement of local communities; decisions often made externally.
Profit Distribution	Aims to distribute economic benefits more directly to the local community.	Profits may flow to external corporations, with limited local benefit.
Cultural Preservation	Emphasizes the preservation and celebration of local cultures.	Cultural adaptation may occur to meet tourist preferences.
Environmental Sustainability	Prioritizes sustainable practices to minimize environmental impact.	May contribute to environmental degradation, especially in mass tourism.
Scale and Mass Tourism	Typically smaller in scale, avoiding negative impacts of mass tourism.	Often involves mass tourism, leading to overcrowding and environmental issues.
Authenticity of Experience	Focuses on providing authentic, immersive experiences for visitors.	May prioritize standardized and commercialized experiences.
Economic Empowerment	Aims to empower local communities economically through tourism.	Economic benefits may not be evenly distributed, and leakage can occur.
Community-Based Enterprises	Encourages the development of community-based businesses and enterprises.	Commercialization may dominate, with limited local entrepreneurship.
Collaboration with External Partners	Involves collaboration with external entities to provide support and resources.	Decisions and support may come from external entities but with less community involvement.
Long-Term Sustainability	Focuses on long-term sustainability and enduring benefits for the community.	Tends to prioritize short-term economic gains without always considering long-term impacts.

2.2 Community Engagement in Tourism Development

Community engagement refers to involving local residents in the planning, decision-making, and implementation of tourism activities that affect their lives. Engaged communities are more likely to take ownership of tourism initiatives, resulting in improved destination management and a greater sense of empowerment. (Nagarjuna, 2015)

To ensure that tourist growth is in line with the hopes and dreams of local people and that everyone feels responsible for achieving sustainable results, community involvement is essential. To make sure that tourists and host communities both profit from tourism while keeping negative effects to a minimum, this strategy takes into account the significance of local knowledge, beliefs, and interests. (Sustainable Travel International, 2020)

It is critical to make sure that all parts of the community are represented in community participation. Indigenous communities and low-income neighborhoods are two examples of underrepresented groups who should have a voice in policymaking. As a result, people in the sector may start to feel more invested in its success or failure. Communities are more inclined to care about the success of tourism in the long run when they have a hand in planning it and when they get the benefits of it (Wisdom, 2023).

2.3 Sustainable Tourism Dimensions and its Impacts

Sustainable tourism is characterized by a harmonious integration of economic, social, and environmental considerations, to ensure long-term benefits for destinations, local communities, and visitors. (UNWTO, 2005)

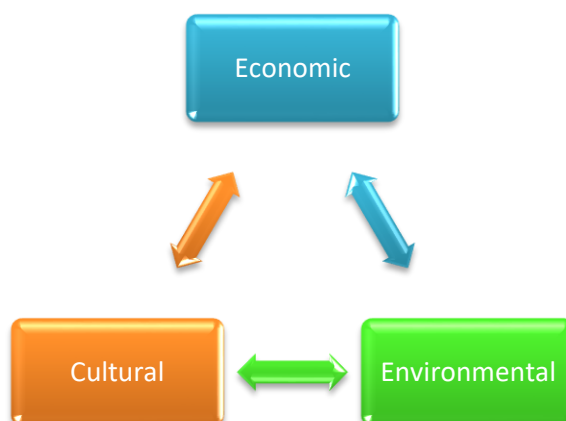


Figure 2: Sustainability Dimension

“Significant economic, socio-cultural, and environmental development occurs due to community based tourism projects” (Lee & Jan, 2019).

The three dimensions of sustainability—economic, cultural, and environmental—are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Economic sustainability entails generating income and employment opportunities, while cultural sustainability involves preserving cultural heritage and fostering positive interactions between tourists and locals. Environmental sustainability focuses on minimizing the negative impacts of tourism on ecosystems and natural resources. (UNWTO, 2005)

Communities must rely on the resources at their disposal to support themselves, which makes sustainability crucial. According to Jan van der Straaten's research on sustainable tourist development in the Alpine region (Chapter 14), the expansion of tourism is typically propelled by economic necessity. Therefore, ideas of economic, social, and cultural sustainability are inextricably linked to those of environmental sustainability.

2.3.1 Economic impact of tourism on local communities

Tourism's contribution to employment and income generation

One of the most evident outcomes of tourism is the boost in economic opportunities. My survey respondents highlighted an increase in job opportunities, income generation, and GDP contribution. The influx of tourists has not only stimulated local businesses but has also provided a platform for the growth of small enterprises. Improved roads, expressways, and transportation facilities were noted as positive outcomes, enhancing the overall living standards in communities. The government's investments in these areas are seen as crucial for accommodating both residents and the growing number of tourists.

A large and expanding part of the world's economy is the tourist industry. If this sector does not expand, a nation's economy will not grow. It is possible that a country's economy, especially its GDP and employment prospects, may benefit from an uptick in tourism (Manzoor, Wei, Asif, Haq, & Rehman, 2019)

The paper states that in 2017, the tourism sector directly contributed \$5.3 billion to Bangladesh's GDP, which accounted for 2.2% of the total GDP. It is expected that this contribution will rise at an annual rate of 6.8% and reach \$7.5 billion by 2028 (UDDIN, 2019). Tourism often generates fresh employment prospects for local communities,

including a wide range of occupations in the fields of hospitality, transportation, cultural guidance, and craftsmanship. These options have the potential to greatly decrease unemployment rates, particularly in regions where alternative career alternatives are few. Nevertheless, it is crucial to do a thorough evaluation of the caliber of these employment opportunities, taking into account elements such as work stability, equitable remuneration, and perks. The fluctuation in tourist demand according to seasons might also affect the stability of employment in these areas (Soja, 2022).

Tourism has a significant economic impact on the area by leading to higher employment rates and increased earnings. Regarding employment, the local community has the potential to raise their incomes and socioeconomic standing, resulting in an improved quality of life. Tourism facilitates the development of local communities and contributes to the alleviation of poverty (Manzoor, Wei, Asif, Haq, & Rehman, 2019).

Entrepreneurship opportunities for locals

The tourist industry in Bangladesh employs about 5 million people directly or indirectly, and by 2030, another 2 million workers will be added. The country's unemployment rate is being continually reduced by the UNDP Bangladesh Accelerator Lab's tactics. (UNDP, 2023)

Tourism can foster entrepreneurship by encouraging locals to start small businesses catering to tourists' needs. These enterprises can include restaurants, souvenir shops, handicraft workshops, and homestays. Such businesses empower communities by enabling them to capitalize on their unique cultural and natural assets, thereby enhancing economic resilience. (TripZip, 2023)

In Bangladesh, tourism—particularly community-based tourism (CBT) is an ethical and sustainable means of advancing both cultural preservation and economic growth. CBT can help to enhance rural communities' standard of living while simultaneously fostering tolerance and understanding of different cultures by collaborating with locals to create tourism-related goods and services. It is a means of encouraging a more accountable and sustainable tourist sector in the nation as well as empowering the local communities. (TripZip, 2023)

Cultural changes and preservation of heritage

A significant aspect of tourism lies in its ability to facilitate cultural exchange. Respondents noted that tourism promotes the local culture and heritage, often commercializing traditional art and cuisine. The exposure of local offerings to an international platform not only brings economic benefits but also fosters a sense of pride within the community.

While tourism can introduce communities to new cultures and ideas, it also has the potential to lead to cultural homogenization and loss of authenticity. Balancing the integration of new influences with the preservation of traditional cultural practices becomes crucial. Community involvement in tourism-related activities, such as cultural performances and workshops, can help maintain and showcase local traditions while generating income. (Solimar International, 2021)

Tourism can facilitate cultural exchange by allowing tourists to interact with local communities and experience their traditions, customs, and way of life. Local communities may adapt to the preferences and expectations of tourists, potentially altering their cultural practices, crafts, and cuisine to cater to the market. Tourism often exposes local communities to global trends and influences, which can lead to the adoption of new styles, technologies, and consumer preferences. Also raise awareness about the value of cultural heritage, leading to its preservation and conservation. And can provide income-generating opportunities related to cultural heritage, such as traditional crafts, cultural performances, and guided tours. (Akova & Atsız, 2019)

Sustainable tourism development should aim to strike a balance between the economic benefits of tourism and the preservation of cultural heritage. This involves active involvement and empowerment of local communities and responsible tourism practices that respect and protect the authenticity of local cultures and traditions. (Akova & Atsız, 2019)

Empowerment of marginalized groups

Tourism can empower marginalized groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, and indigenous communities, by offering them opportunities for economic participation and social inclusion. However, special attention must be paid to ensuring that these groups have equitable access to benefits and decision-making processes. Empowering marginalized communities requires addressing gender disparities, promoting cultural

sensitivity, and ensuring that their rights are respected. (Agarwal, Isha, Lrappa, Akaremsetty, & Shekhar, 2023)

Understanding the socio-economic impacts of tourism on local communities is pivotal for formulating policies that maximize positive outcomes while mitigating potential negative consequences. (Agarwal, Isha, Lrappa, Akaremsetty, & Shekhar, 2023)

2.3.2 Cultural implications and community identity

Tourism can facilitate enriching cultural exchange experiences, allowing tourists and local communities to learn from each other's traditions, languages, and ways of life. Interactions with tourists provide an opportunity for communities to showcase their unique cultural heritage, fostering mutual respect and understanding. However, there's a delicate balance between sharing culture authentically and commodifying it for tourist consumption. (Solimar International, 2021)

Developing a prosperous tourism sector is a very effective approach for local residents in any region to preserve their cultural heritage and provide visitors with valuable educational opportunities when executed properly. Modern travelers need genuine experiences that include fully engaging with a foreign culture, going beyond just beautiful landscapes and refined dining opportunities. Tourism may be seen as an educational tool as well as a method for safeguarding and enlightening people about cultural resources. Traveling may be seen as a transactional activity including the exchange of money, interaction with the local community throughout the duration of the visit, and the accumulation of emotions and memorable experiences. Nevertheless, the outcomes, known as "post-visit behaviors," are likely to be more significant when the visitor participates in an itinerary that prioritizes heritage tourism (Solimar International, 2021).

Engaging local communities in the development of cultural tourism initiatives ensures that their values and perspectives are accurately represented. When communities actively participate in crafting their narratives, cultural experiences become more authentic and meaningful. Local artisans, performers, and storytellers can contribute to crafting immersive experiences that resonate with visitors. (Begum, 2019)

Compared to other tourism business segments, cultural tourism holds a significant market share. Activities related to the promotion of public archaeology may fall under the category

of cultural tourism. These may include visiting museums and archaeological sites, deciphering inscriptions, staging historical events, and ultimately leading to the rediscovery of indigenous cultural festivals. Comparing cultural tourism to mass tourism, which is unnecessary and has detrimental effects, can reveal many economic, social, and environmental benefits, especially in rural areas and developing nations. (Horaira & Devi, 2021)

As tourism grows, there's a risk of cultural commodification and the transformation of traditional practices into staged performances. This can lead to loss of authenticity and a sense of alienation among community members. Additionally, increased exposure to external influences can lead to a dilution of cultural traditions. Managing the balance between cultural authenticity and commercial viability is a challenge that requires careful planning and community engagement. (Dolma Foundation, 2019)

Preserving community identity and cultural heritage within the context of tourism requires strategies that celebrate tradition while accommodating the interests of tourists. This chapter sheds light on the intricate interplay between cultural preservation and tourism development, contributing to a holistic understanding of the role of local communities in sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. (Dolma Foundation, 2019)

2.3.3 Environmental conservation and community stewardship

Ecotourism and biodiversity conservation

The natural beauty, diversity of life, and abundance of habitats and landscapes found in intact ecosystems are the main draws for ecotourism destinations. Regional planning and development must include ecotourism development and biodiversity protection as cornerstones in light of the devolution of public administration to the district and provincial levels (De Zoysa, 2022)

When done in a responsible manner, ecotourism has the potential to aid in the preservation of biodiversity and natural resources. Because they depend on these resources for their livelihoods, local populations are often the ones that go above and beyond to protect their environment. To combat habitat deterioration and overexploitation, ecotourism may incentivize local populations to take an active role in protecting their ecosystems (De Zoysa, 2022)

Community Based Natural Resource Management

By including and empowering local people in the management and use of their natural resources, Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBRRM) offers a sustainable solution to the problems of environmental conservation and resource management. The significance of community involvement in resource management decision-making, planning, and implementation is acknowledged by this method (Darkoh, 2008).

Sustainable resource management is often a topic that local communities have inherited through the years. More environmentally friendly procedures may be achieved by incorporating this information into the administration and planning of tourist activities. Traditional societies may have knowledge about environmentally friendly agricultural practices or fishing techniques that might help achieve conservation objectives (Darkoh, 2008).

Balancing conservation and tourism development

A challenge lies in achieving a balance between conserving natural resources and accommodating the demands of tourism development. The influx of visitors can strain local ecosystems, leading to issues like pollution, habitat destruction, and increased energy consumption. Effective community engagement is essential in finding solutions that minimize these negative impacts while maximizing the benefits of tourism. (See Sight Tours, 2023)

Community stewardship of the environment goes hand in hand with sustainable tourism development. Balancing conservation and tourism development requires a coordinated and holistic approach that takes into account the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders. Successful management often involves adaptive strategies that can evolve over time as tourism patterns and environmental conditions change. (See Sight Tours, 2023)

2.4 Role of Local Communities in Sustainable Tourism

Local communities play multifaceted roles in sustainable tourism. Their involvement is essential for ensuring that tourism activities have positive economic, social, and

environmental impacts while minimizing negative effects. As hosts, they contribute to authentic cultural experiences, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of destinations. Their knowledge of traditions and history enriches visitor experiences, fostering cultural exchange. Additionally, communities serve as stewards of natural resources, practicing sustainable resource management that aligns with long-term environmental goals. Local communities are the guardians of their cultural heritage. They can actively preserve and promote their traditions, customs, art, and history, providing authentic and enriching experiences for tourists. By sharing their culture with visitors, local communities help educate tourists about the significance of their customs, contributing to cultural appreciation and understanding.

2.4.1 Inclusivity in Tourism Planning and Development

Involving local communities in the planning and decision-making processes related to tourism is crucial for creating a sense of ownership and ensuring that the outcomes align with their needs and aspirations. Inclusive participation allows communities to voice their concerns, share insights, and contribute innovative ideas that might otherwise be overlooked. (Rahman, 2011)

2.4.2 Collaboration between Communities and Government/Industry

Effective collaboration between communities, government agencies, and tourism industry stakeholders is essential for sustainable tourism development. Local communities possess valuable insights into the intricacies of their environments and cultures. Engaging them in discussions with government and industry representatives ensures that policies and practices reflect a broad range of perspectives and are more likely to result in positive outcomes for all stakeholders. (Rahman, 2011)

2.4.3 Strengthening Local Capacity and Skills

Building the capacity of local communities to actively engage in tourism-related activities requires training and education. Skills development programs can empower community members to take on various roles within the tourism sector, from hospitality to cultural interpretation. These initiatives not only improve the quality of services offered but also

enhance the communities' ability to negotiate and advocate for their interests. (Rahman, 2011)

Empowering local communities to participate in decision-making processes and contribute to tourism development fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility (Rahman, 2011). This chapter delves into the various aspects of community participation and collaboration, emphasizing their role in creating a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between local populations and the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

Residents can benefit from tourism through employment opportunities in various sectors, including hospitality, guiding, handicraft production, and agriculture. Encouraging and supporting local businesses, such as restaurants and shops, can boost the local economy. They are often the stewards of natural resources and landscapes. They can actively participate in preserving and conserving these resources, ensuring the sustainability of the environment for future generations. Involvement in responsible resource management helps protect ecosystems and ensures that natural attractions remain viable for tourism. Sometimes local communities can educate both visitors and themselves about the importance of responsible tourism practices. This includes waste reduction, energy conservation, and the protection of wildlife and natural habitats. Raising awareness about the impact of tourism can lead to more responsible behavior among both tourists and locals.

2.5 Challenges and Barriers to Community Engagement

Community engagement in the context of sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh faces several challenges, some of which are common in many other regions, while others may be specific to the country's unique socio-economic and cultural circumstances.

Limited access to resources and infrastructure, insufficient training and capacity building, and unequal power dynamics between communities and external stakeholders can hinder meaningful participation. Balancing traditional livelihoods with tourism-related activities can also create tensions, necessitating careful management of trade-offs. (Wisdom, 2023)

Understanding and addressing these challenges and barriers is essential for facilitating meaningful community engagement in sustainable tourism development. This chapter

highlights the obstacles that local communities may face and examines strategies to overcome them, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between communities and the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

2.5.1 Lack of Awareness and Education

One of the primary barriers to effective community engagement in sustainable tourism development is a lack of awareness and understanding. Many community members might not be fully aware of the potential benefits of tourism or the importance of their involvement. Addressing this gap through educational programs and awareness campaigns is crucial for building support and enthusiasm for community engagement initiatives. (Reindrawati, 2023)

2.5.2 Limited Access to Resources and Infrastructure

Communities in some areas may lack the necessary resources and infrastructure to actively participate in tourism activities. Insufficient transportation, communication, and basic amenities can hinder their ability to interact with tourists and create tourism-related enterprises. Investments in infrastructure development and resource allocation can help overcome these barriers. (Mustapha, Azman, & Ibrahim, 2013)

2.5.3 Conflicts between Traditional Livelihoods and Tourism

Communities with traditional livelihoods such as agriculture or fishing might face conflicts when attempting to balance these practices with tourism-related activities. Seasonal fluctuations in tourism demand can disrupt established ways of life and put pressure on local resources. Striking a balance that integrates tourism without jeopardizing traditional livelihoods requires careful planning and collaboration. (Tosun, 2000)

2.5.4 External Pressures and Exploitation

Communities can sometimes fall victim to external pressures from developers, investors, or tourism operators who seek to exploit their resources without considering long-term sustainability. Unethical practices such as land grabbing, overdevelopment, and inadequate compensation can lead to tensions and negatively impact community engagement efforts. (Tosun, 2000)

Some communities may have limited access to resources and funding to develop and maintain tourism-related infrastructure or to market their products and services to tourists. Communities may lack the necessary skills and training to engage with tourists and provide quality services. Training opportunities and capacity-building programs can be limited. These can hinder their ability to actively engage in the tourism development process. (Reindrawati, 2023)

2.6 Related Scholarly Articles

This section covers a review of various scholarly articles available on the thesis topic. The research and the findings of each paper have been discussed in detail to provide a comprehensive analysis of the already available literature. A study by Nurlisa et al explored the integration of sustainability in the tourism industry, particularly focusing on Balige as a priority destination for national development. By emphasizing the economic benefits, the research investigated forms of community participation to promote sustainability, employing both quantitative and qualitative methods such as questionnaires, interviews, and observations for data collection. As a result of the findings, recommendations were developed for utilizing community engagement in order to develop the economy in Balige, which ultimately can contribute to the realization of sustainable tourism in the region (Nurlisa, 2023).

Jeelani et al in their study investigated the crucial role of community participation in sustainable tourism, particularly in fragile mountain ecosystems. It assessed the attitudes of Pahalgam's local communities using the Sustainable Tourism Attitude Scale (SUS-TAS) by Employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Results showed strong support for sustainable tourism growth, with residents prioritizing development and minimal perception of negative impacts. SUS-TAS was also validated as a robust tool for measuring residents' attitudes and emphasizes its applicability in emerging tourism locations. Acknowledging limitations, the research underscores the evolving tourism paradigm towards sustainability, necessitating stakeholder engagement for future development while respecting diverse socio-cultural perspectives. (Jeelani, 2022)

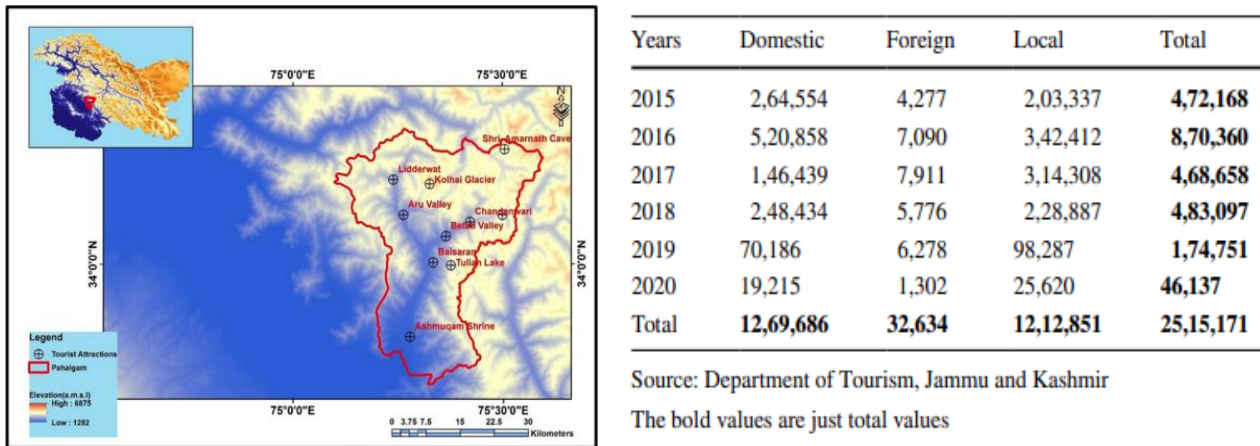


Figure 3: Tourist hotspots and the total number of visitors to Pahalgam from 2015 to 2020 shown on a map of the research region superimposed on a Digital Elevation Model (DEM) {Accessed from (Jeelani, 2022)}

Samani et al conducted a research on the decrease of the Bossou Forest Reserve (BFR) in Guinea, West Africa. They found that the loss was caused by inadequate management of the ecotourism industry and a lack of community involvement. The study highlighted the significance of including sustainable ecotourism planning by using the Limits of Acceptable Change paradigm. The fieldwork conducted in 2019 used concept mapping and a participatory geographic information system (PGIS) technique to actively include the community in the design of ecotourism. Data analysis facilitated the identification of opportunities for conservation and livelihood problems, as well as a community-centered situational evaluation. The authors placed great emphasis on the establishment of an ecotourism management strategy and the enhancement of BFR resilience to both internal and external shocks. The PGIS-based technique is deemed applicable to analogous West African locations characterized by comparable ecological and livelihood situations (Samani, 2023).

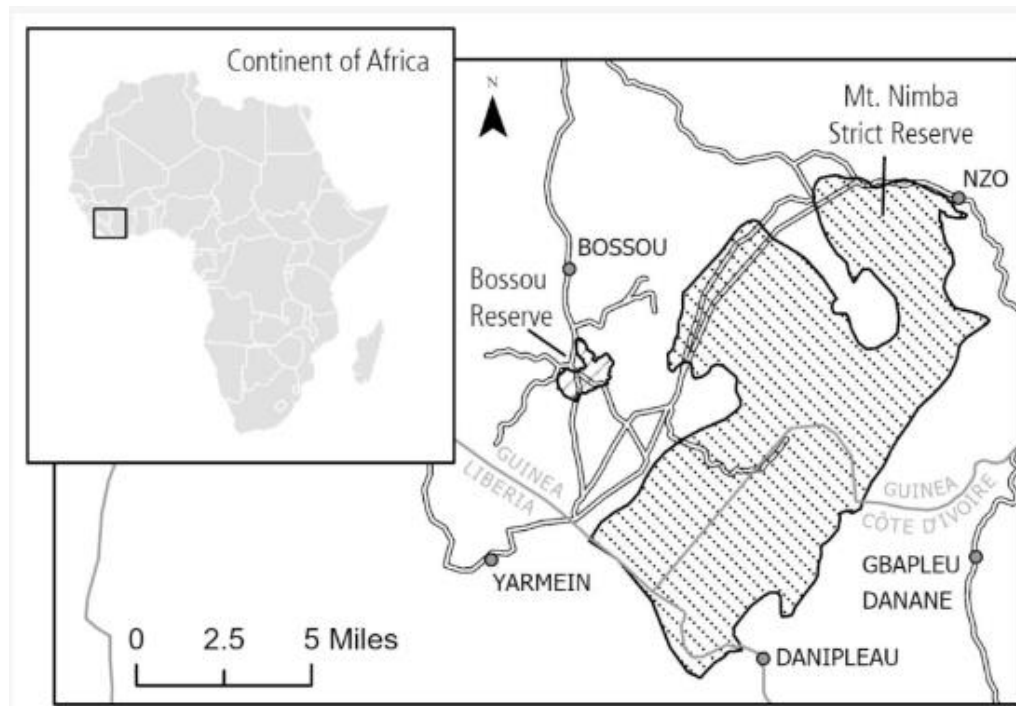


Figure 4: Location map of the Bossou Forest Reserve in Guinea, West Africa, located near the transboundary Mount Nimba Strict Nature Reserve. {Accessed from (Samani, 2023)}

Baloch et al in their work study performed an empirical approach to explore the relationship between tourism development and environmental sustainability. The study involved diverse tourism stakeholders, utilizing 650 questionnaires to assess perceptions of socio-economic benefits and environmental impacts. Findings indicated that there were positive views on economic growth but highlighted the gradual degradation of natural and environmental capital, leading to social vulnerabilities. The proposed framework emphasized a balance between business and environmental interests, with government support and policy interventions. The study advocated for sustained ecotourism development by ensuring effective conservation. The model framework was suggested for broader application in destination management, offering insights into sustainable practices in diverse locales (Baloch, 2023).

Iqbal et al in their study addressed the essential role of community participation in developing sustainable and competitive tourist destinations. Acknowledging the established importance of community involvement, the study emphasized the dynamic and

complex nature of the tourism industry, highlighting the ongoing debate over the conceptualization and practical implementation of community participation. To navigate these complexities, the study proposed a normative model that categorizes community participation at different levels, based on the degree of residents' control and authority over tourism development. Drawing on Tosun's typology, the model underscored the need for empowering local communities to ensure meaningful and spontaneous participation, fostering support for sustainable and competitive tourism strategies. According to the authors, lower empowerment levels, conversely, may result in coercive participation, diminishing local support and hindering destination development efforts (Iqbal, 2023).

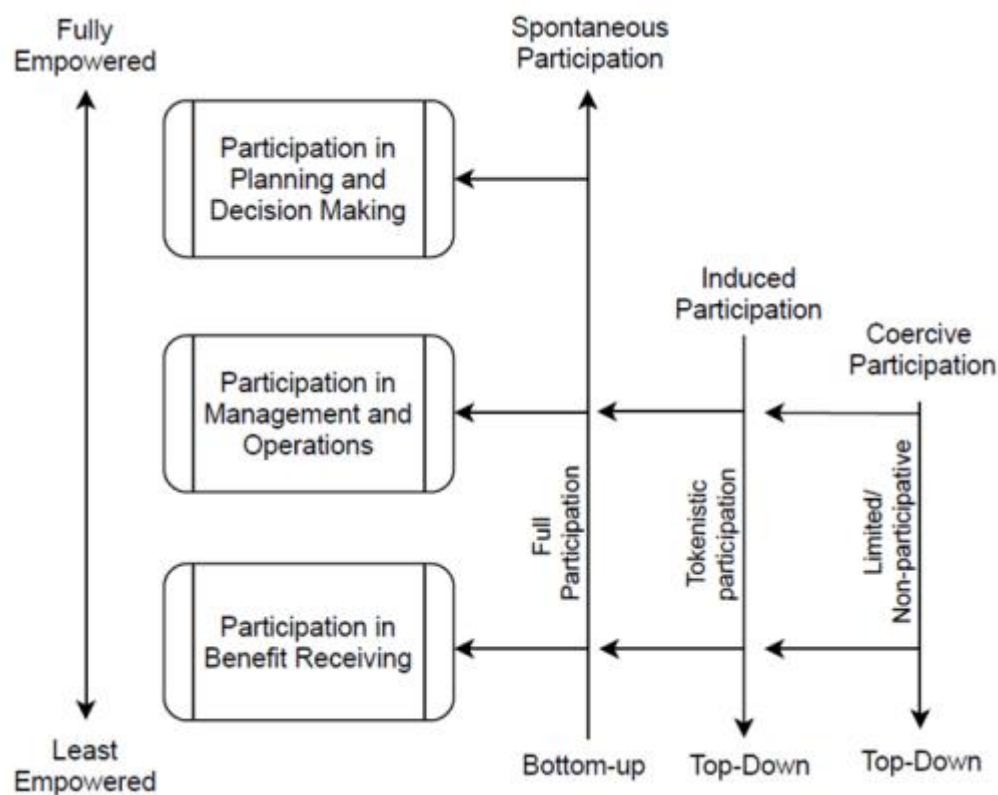


Figure 5: A Normative Model for Community Participants {Accessed from (Iqbal, 2023)}

In their research Eyisi et al investigated the ongoing scholarly focus on advocating for responsible tourism development. It traced the evolution of responsible tourism as a call to action in the 1990s, emphasizing the shift from setting sustainable tourism agendas to stakeholder accountability. The research looked at ways to encourage responsible tourism in the southeast area of Nigeria, with an emphasis on the country's growing tourist industry. Stakeholder empowerment, expanded capacity for policy implementation,

improved security, and financing for tourist amenities were among the important initiatives uncovered by the study, which relied on semi-structured interviews and focus groups with 166 stakeholders. To achieve future growth that is favorable to both residents and tourists, the results highlighted the need for well-implemented tourism plans (Eyisi, 2021).



Figure 6: Five Major States of Southeastern Nigeria

A paper by Dwyer et al highlighted the growing endorsement of the Beyond GDP approach for development among policymakers and researchers globally. While not initially intended for tourism, this method is now being used more often to evaluate the welfare of local populations affected by tourist growth. The research suggested a framework that integrates important aspects of well-being, based on the concept of Beyond GDP. This framework aims to guide efforts towards attaining sustainable tourism development. The Beyond GDP study agenda examined several interpretations of 'beyond' and organized the conversation around the obligations of players in the tourist sector. The study concluded that the Beyond GDP method has the potential to provide useful insights for enhancing conceptual knowledge, improving industry practices, and implementing policies in destination tourist development. Open (Dwyer, 2020).

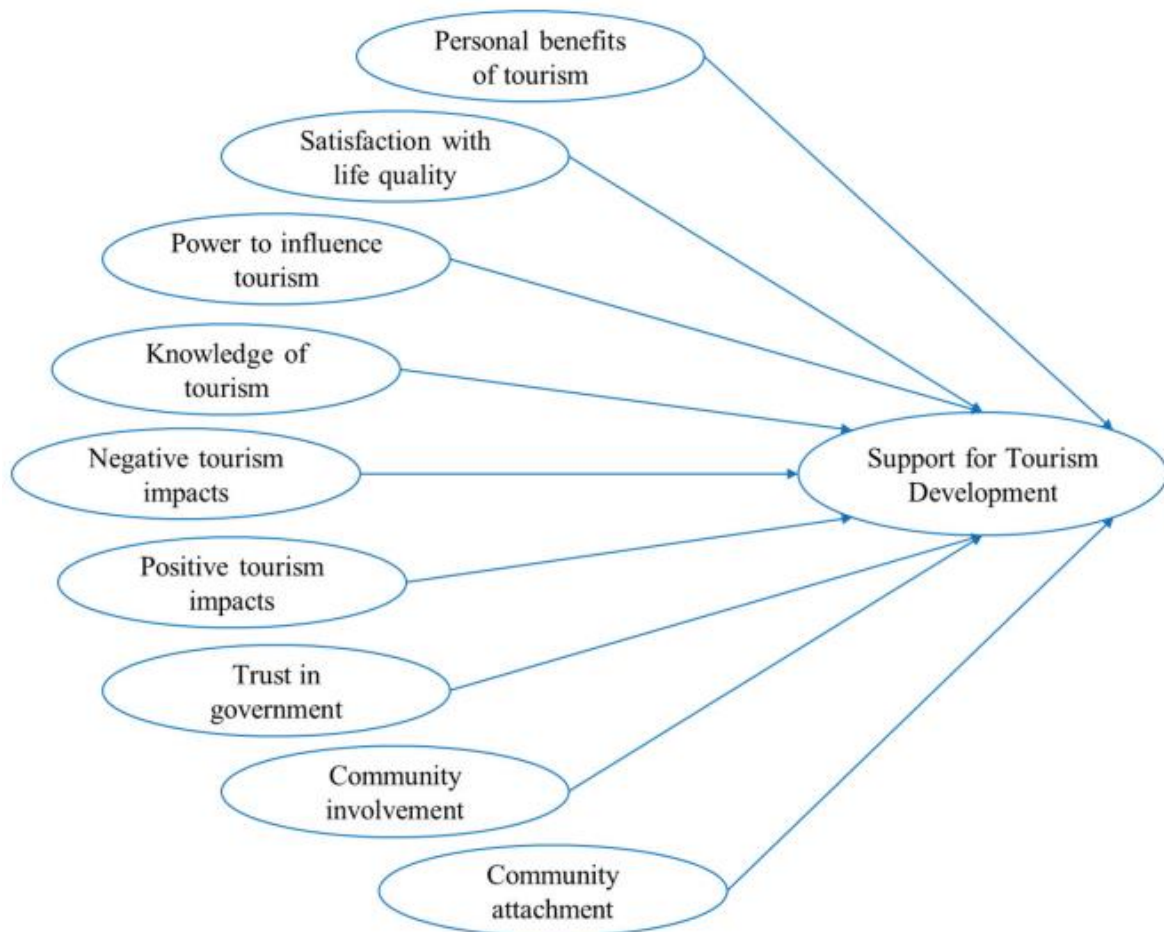


Figure 7: The Proposed Research Model {Accessed from (Olya, 2020)}

Chammaro et al examined the discrepancies in views and actions towards sustainable tourism between the local people and tourists in Madrid, a well-established destination that extensively utilizes accommodation-sharing systems. The 21-item SUS-TAS was independently verified for residents and visitors using a multi-group confirmatory component analysis. The research found that the first-order, seven-factor model exhibits full configural invariance, partial metric invariance, and partial scalar invariance. The primary distinctions among organizations mostly revolve around the principles of a "community-centered economy" and "maximizing community participation". The research concludes that SUS-TAS is a reliable tool for evaluating attitudes in an environment where accommodation-sharing platforms are widely used. This has ramifications for future research and recognizes the constraints of the study (Chammaro, 2021).

A study by Sutianto et al highlighted the imperative need for the implementation of sustainable tourist development on Penyengat Island, with a specific emphasis on its historical and religious attractions. The proposal suggested that the use of local knowledge,

namely from mosques, chair hills, and graves, in all phases of planning, implementing, and evaluating community-based tourism. The concept aimed to facilitate the growth of the tourist industry while maintaining sustainable local practices. The research predicted that the local population would experience improved economic conditions and higher earnings, highlighting the practicality of increasing religious tourism on Penyengat Island. The sustainability of this tourist endeavor is enhanced by legal assistance, community engagement, and the presence of pre-existing facilities. To further strengthen the program, it was recommended by the authors to adopt a cultural city idea and make modifications to the infrastructure (Sutianto, 2023).

The objective of a research conducted by Phuc et al was to assess the viewpoints and endorsement of inhabitants towards the development of sustainable tourism in urban areas, with a specific emphasis on three major neighborhoods inside Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The study used a quantitative and cultural approach with 451 individuals to uncover that community support is shaped by people's views, perceived value, teamwork, and emotional solidarity with their community. The research highlighted the interaction between cooperation and emotional unity within the framework of sustainable development. By acknowledging these elements, the research provided essential knowledge for the purpose of planning and overseeing the development of sustainable tourism (Phuc, 2020).

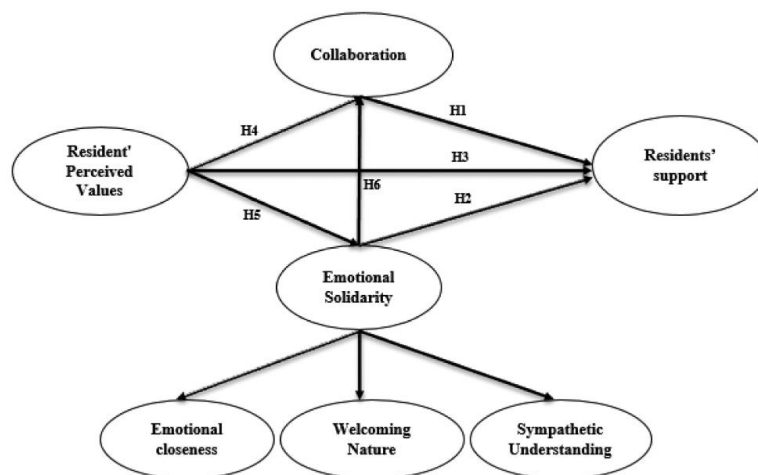


Figure 8: Proposed Research Model by (Phuc, 2020)

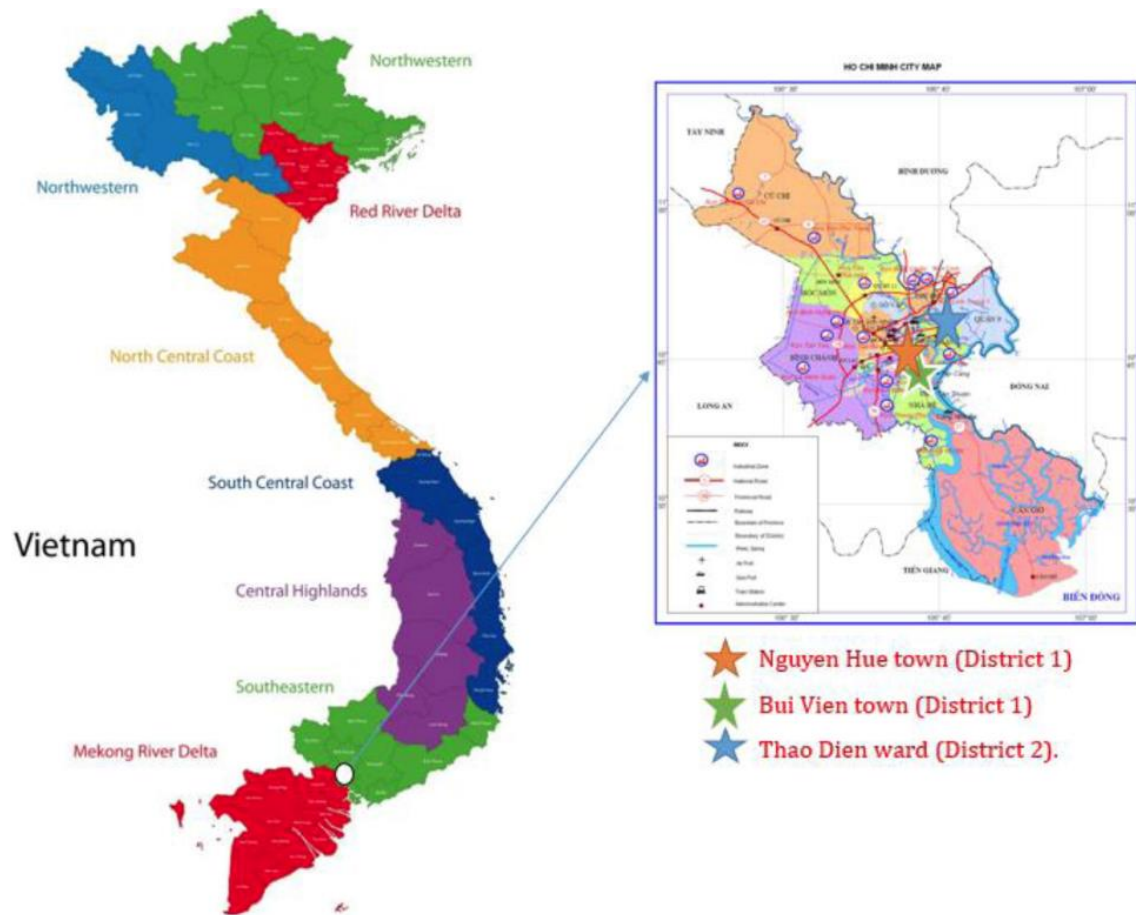


Figure 9: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam {Accessed from (Phuc, 2020)}

In their research, Artunes et al presented a succinct four-item scale to measure the influence of tourism lifestyle entrepreneurs on the tourist experience. The objective was to determine the degree to which visitors regard these entrepreneurs as different from "ordinary entrepreneurs." After generating the items, data from two surveys, which had a total of 200 answers, were analyzed using exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses to evaluate the discriminant and nomological validity. The variables exhibited a strong correlation ($p < 0.01$) with positive coefficients, indicating a statistically meaningful relationship. Additionally, Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.736 was deemed acceptable. The findings added to the current body of research on how tourists perceive tourism lifestyle entrepreneurship, providing valuable insights into the fields of entrepreneurial management, tourism marketing, and company sustainability (Antunes, 2023).

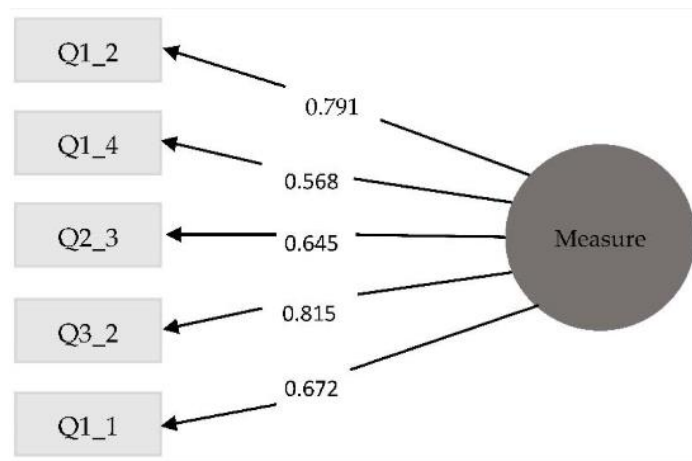


Figure 10: Standardized Coefficients of CFA {Accessed from (Antunes, 2023)}

Lasso et al examined the transformation of Komodo National Park (KNP) in Indonesia into a UNESCO-designated nature-based heritage site and a renowned destination for ecotourism. The study utilized qualitative research methods, such as participant observation, to examine the appropriateness of ecotourism as a means of preserving KNP's natural resources and addressing the needs of the local people. The study provided a twin contribution. Firstly, it critically examined the transition to an economy driven by ecotourism from a local standpoint. This analysis revealed shortcomings in the attainment of sustainable development objectives, contributing to the ongoing critical discussion on ecotourism. Furthermore, it highlighted the varied characteristics of local people and their relationship with the regional economy, promoting inclusive tourism strategies that include many stakeholders outside the immediate protected area (Lasso, 2023).

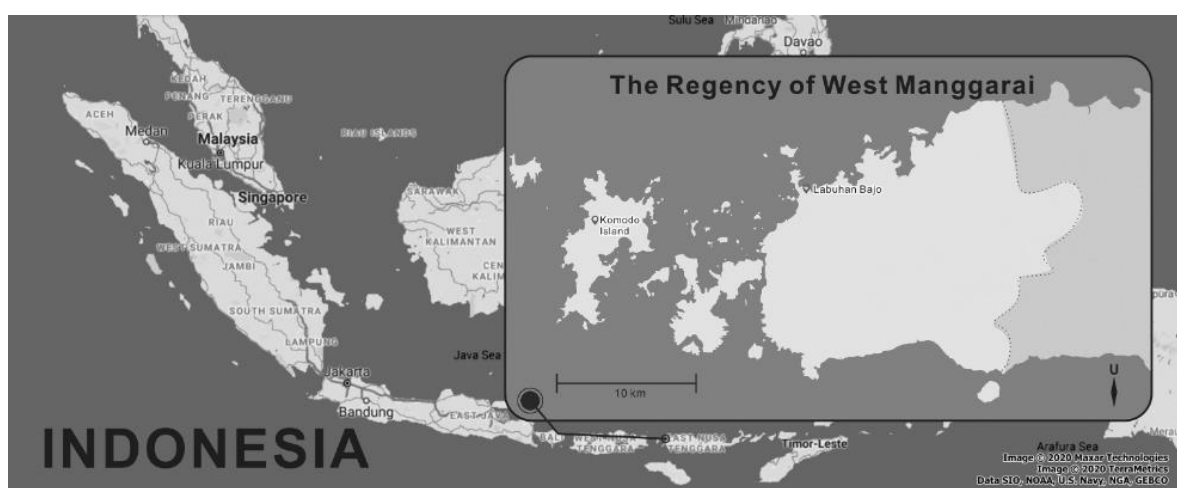


Figure 11: The Regency of West Mangga Rai {Accessed from (Lasso, 2021)}

Schönherr et al highlighted the need of implementing sustainable tourist policies in response to the COVID-19 problem, highlighting the necessity of doing research on the

effects of the crisis on tourism policy. The results of twenty-four comprehensive interviews conducted with global tourism organizations responsible for policy development indicated that policymakers are aware of the significance of sustainable tourism development during the crisis. They are actively creating agendas, such as strategies for sustainable tourism, and implementing policies that address environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and community aspects. Some evaluable contributions towards sustainable tourism were made with the help of this study. Moreover, this study comprehensively explained various techniques and tactics being adopted by different countries for making sustainable tourism (Schönherr, 2023).

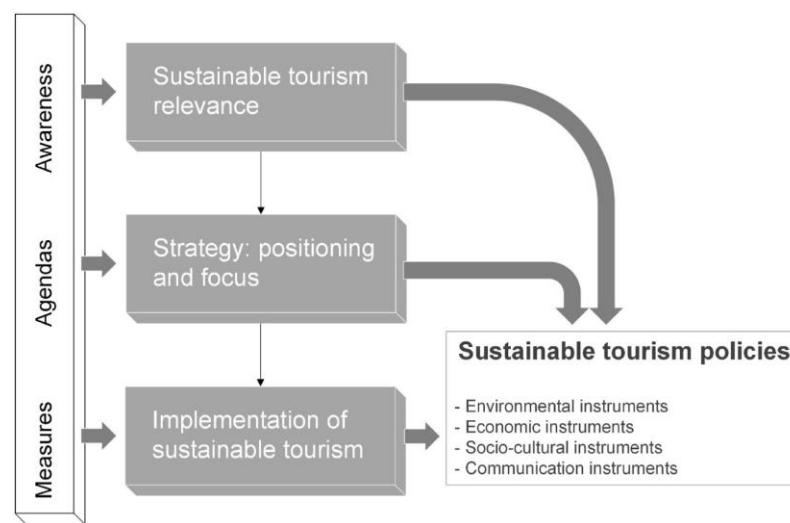


Figure 12: Roadmap for Sustainable Tourism Policy Adoption {Accessed from (Schönherr, 2023)}

Ghaderi et al in their study aimed to enhance and emphasize the use of resource based review (RBV) in the field of tourism. This study also put special emphasis on the involvement of the local community in preserving the national park resources. The authors conducted face to face interviews with 39 local stakeholders to investigate the process of conservation of Touran National park, located in Iran. The results showed that these conservation processes are a result of the altruistic goals like highly motivated self moral commitments etc. Contrary to this, the tourist company stakeholders are usually self motivated. This research focused on the active involvement of the local bodies for better results (Ghaderi, 2021).



Figure 13: The Study's Location {Accessed from (Ghaderi, 2021)}

In their study, Chan et al examined the effects of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on Nepal's growth, specifically focusing on the creation of cross-border infrastructure such as trains and roads. The research examined the expected impact on tourism along the Nepal-China Friendship Highway, specifically analyzing the situations in Dhulikhel and Banepa. The authors stated that enhanced connection is anticipated to enhance commercial activity, tourism, and local development. The study utilized many data gathering techniques, such as interviews, surveys, participant observations, and archival research, to identify the effects, both beneficial and detrimental, on infrastructure, tourism, and local populations. The results underscored the need for cohesive strategies that align the growth of sustainable tourism with the establishment of transportation infrastructure (Chan, 2021).

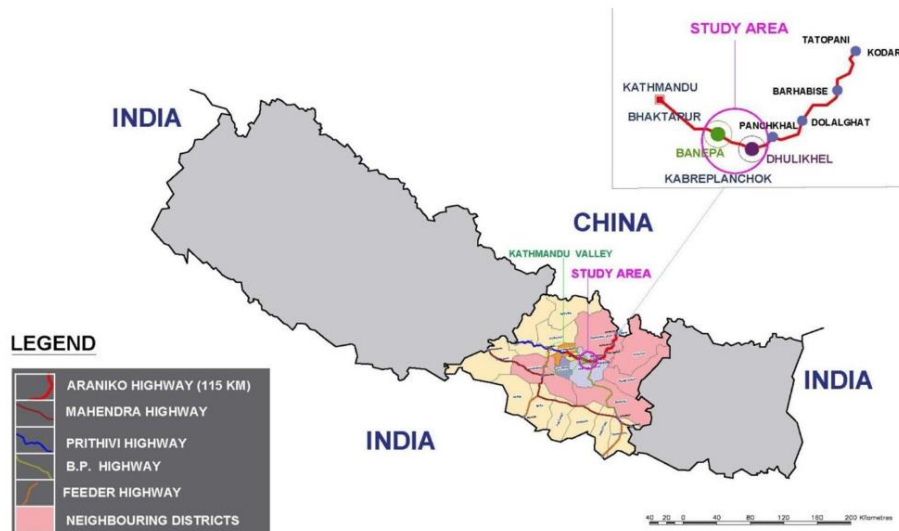


Figure 14: The Study's Focused Region {Accessed from (Chan, 2021)}

The study by Achmad et al centered on the enhancement of community empowerment in Cisaat Tourism Village in Subang Regency, West Java. This was done to enable the residents and the government to effectively use natural and human resources for the management of tourism activities. The research employed a qualitative approach and descriptive methodologies to demonstrate the effectiveness of the community empowerment program in Cisaat. This was proven by the program's achievements in expanding access, increasing community engagement, and implementing effective oversight of tourist settlements. The process of empowerment has significantly contributed to the economic advancement, development of villages, and enhancement of human resources. Nevertheless, the community empowerment process faces constraints such as geographical vulnerability, diverse human resource capabilities, and inadequate environmental concern (Achmad, 2023). Koščak et al in their study aimed to address a deficiency in sustainable tourism research by including the viewpoints of children impacted by tourism in six European sites. The study findings, obtained using a post-test only experimental design with a sample of 498 children, indicated that youngsters are inclined to articulate their viewpoints about tourism. Curiously, their outlook on visitors tends to be unfavorable, and they see natives as inferior to tourists. This study illuminated the distinctive viewpoint of children living in host communities, underscoring the need for more research on their views towards tourism and the significance of including their voices in participatory planning for sustainable tourism (Koščak, 2021).

Trišić et al conducted research on the sustainable advancement of tourism in the Vršac Mountains Outstanding Natural Landscape (ONL), with a particular emphasis on the pivotal contributions of the local populace and visitors. The mountainous region's advantageous geographical location, varied natural and social elements, distinctive plant and animal life, and abundant cultural history make it a promising prospect for sustainable tourism. The study used a quantitative methodology and survey methodology, using a questionnaire to investigate the impact of tourism expansion on the satisfaction levels of both residents and tourists in the ONL. The results emphasized the importance of ecological and socio-cultural factors in achieving sustainability. They confirmed that sustainable tourism has a positive impact on the satisfaction of both local residents and visitors. These findings have implications for the strategic advancement of tourism and the management of conserved areas (Trišić, 2023).



Figure 15: Study Area {Accessed from (Trišić, 2023)}

A study conducted by Cottrell et al examined the impact of four aspects of sustainability (environmental, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional) on residents' satisfaction with the advancement of sustainable tourism in the Frankenwald Nature Park (FNP) region in Germany. The study, comprising of 306 individuals, used structural equation modeling to analyze survey data. The findings supported the idea that all four criteria significantly influence resident satisfaction. Economic sustainability is the primary determinant, with institutional, socio-cultural, and environmental factors following suit in terms of influence. The study emphasized the need of including all elements in order to implement a comprehensive strategy for planning and supervising the sustainable expansion of tourism.

Areas with potential for future research include the improvement of sustainability indicators and the establishment of relevant standards for each indicator (Cottrell, 2013).

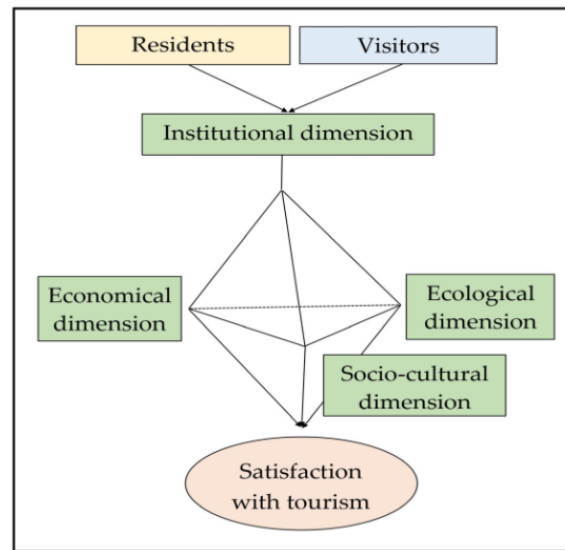


Figure 16: The Conceptual Model {Accessed from (Cottrell, 2013)}

There is a lot of promise for rural tourism in Panjalu, Ciamis, Indonesia, thus a study by Saputro et al looked at the sustainable approach that has been utilized to grow rural tourism there. The research made use of both ANP and Multi-Dimensional Scaling (MDS). Based on a number of factors for ecological, socio-cultural, and economic elements, the MDS analysis assessed rural tourism in Panjalu as adequate in terms of sustainability. Biodiversity, Local Community Involvement, and Livelihood Diversification are some of the features that the MDS has classified as sensitive for each criterion. With cultural and community-based rural tourism as the top strategic focus, these sensitive qualities lead the design of sustainable tourist strategies for rural areas (Saputro, 2023).

economic, social, and environmental aspects. The research delved into the contribution of CSR to innovation, good practices, and the achievement of long-term objectives in the hotel industry, drawing on conceptual aspects backed by current information from specialized scientific databases. Irrespective of business size, the overarching goal is to pool notable industry expertise for strategic, worldwide application. Exploratory qualitative methods, such as data presentation and descriptive analysis, were used in the research.



Figure 18: Geographic location of Beigua Geopark Territory {Accessed from (Prieto, 2022)}

An article by Pietro et al delved deeper at how CSR initiatives in the hotel sector relate to tourism-driven economic development. It emphasized the need for a responsibility-based approach to regional development that takes into account economic, social, and environmental factors. The research delved into the ways in which CSR aids in the hotel industry's pursuit of innovation, best practices, and long-term objectives by drawing on theoretical components backed by up-to-date data from specialist scientific databases. Regardless of the size of the organization, the overarching goal is to strategically combine notable industry expertise for global use. Descriptive analysis and data presentation are examples of exploratory qualitative approaches used in the research (Pietro, 2022).

In their research Matthew et al looked at how different places in Kerala, India, affect locals' happiness as a result of responsible tourism's financial, social, cultural, and ecological obligations. Findings from a questionnaire survey of 493 people showed that these areas

of responsibility have a substantial impact on people's happiness in their local communities. Economic responsibility has a direct influence on one's financial well-being, while social duty has a direct effect on the well-being of the community. Cultural responsibility directly affects emotional well-being, and environmental responsibility directly affects the well-being of health and safety. The study also delved into the intervening mechanisms, revealing this. According to the authors, responsible tourist promotion and community well-being management may both benefit greatly from the results (Matthew, 2021).

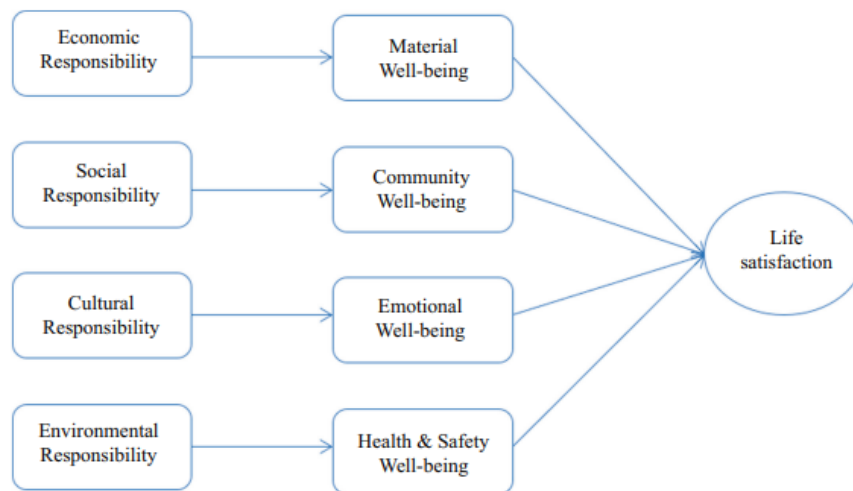


Figure 19: Hypothetical Model of the Study {Accessed from (Matthew, 2021)}

3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research method designed to comprehensively investigate the role of local communities in sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh. The primary aim of this qualitative research study is to explore and understand the perspectives, experiences, and insights of tourism professionals and students from local ethnic communities in Bangladesh regarding sustainable tourism development. The research seeks to uncover the roles, challenges, and potential benefits associated with community engagement in sustainable tourism practices. The combination of the survey and different article's views, allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex dynamics between communities and tourism. In addition to being prepared by research participants, this study also included information from other reliable sources, such as books, papers, journals, magazines, and websites.

3.2 Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered via a self-administered open-ended survey questionnaire. Seven elements made up the questionnaire, the first of which was a demographic profile. The next four sections are based on sustainable tourism awareness, tourism's impact on the community, community participation in tourism and environmental concerns. In section six, the challenges and barriers of local community engagement were focushed. The respondent's goals for the future were the main focus of the final part.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

The survey was specifically designed and carried out with the intention of gathering information from residents of certain communities located within various tourist destinations in Bangladesh. Quantitative and qualitative information regarding the perceptions, attitudes, economic, and environmental impacts of tourism on local communities was gathered through the use of this survey. Quantification of responses can

be accomplished through the use of closed-ended items, multiple-choice questions, and Likert scale questions.

3.4 Sample Population

Due to the fact that all of the respondents were from Bangladesh, the sample was considered to be localized, which is consistent with the study's emphasis on local communities within the country. A response rate of 68.6% was achieved by the survey, with 24 of the 35 individuals who were approached providing insightful responses based on their experiences. Based on this response rate, it appears that the sample is reasonably engaged, indicating that there is interest in the subject of the survey. There was a significant gender gap among the 24 people who took part in the survey, with 83.3% of them identifying as male and 16.7% of them identifying as female. A disproportionately high number of males participated in the research, as indicated by this gender distribution.

3.5 Data Validity and Reliability

Research and measurement rely on the ideas of data validity and reliability to guarantee that their results are accurate and consistent. How well a measurement captures the target variable is what we mean when we talk about validity. The ability of a measurement to provide reliable and relevant data depends on its validity. A true measurement, therefore, is one that faithfully captures the essence of the thing it claims to quantify. The stability or consistency of measurement throughout time, across observers, or under varied settings is what we mean when we talk about reliability. To derive useful conclusions from research data, a dependable measurement must generate consistent findings. Variability and noise in the data might be introduced by inaccurate measurements.

4 Empirical Framework

4.1 Empirical Analysis

The term "empirical analysis" refers to a way of looking at data that is based on real, observable facts rather than speculation. Direct and indirect observation, as well as actual experience, are essential components of scientific investigation that are used to test hypotheses. The scientific method is the engine that drives empirical analysis, which aims to find evidence that supports claims or lets you draw conclusions. Statistical analysis, data categorization according to the studied risk factors, and risk calculations for each category make up this study's methodology. Making fact-based judgments and carrying out scientific inquiries both rely heavily on empirical analysis, which is a rigorous procedure.

A thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data collected from the Google Form's open-ended questions. Responses from participants on their present level of engagement in sustainable tourism projects, the advantages they see, the difficulties they encounter, and any recommendations for development revealed common themes and trends. To supplement the quantitative results, this qualitative study delves further into the respondents' actual experiences and perspectives. A thorough comprehension of the part played by local communities in the development of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh is made possible by combining quantitative and qualitative assessments.

After careful consideration, the findings of the survey have been examined. In this thesis, each and every reaction has been meticulously plotted out and presented. In addition to that, the demographic information of the participants has been added. An approach known as qualitative research is used in this study. The information that has been acquired is analyzed in order to draw meaningful conclusions, recognize patterns, correlations, or trends, and interpret the findings in relation to the questions or hypotheses that were posed prior to the research.

4.1.1 Demographic Information

With 83.3% of respondents identifying as male and 16.7% identifying as female, the survey's findings reflect a gender distribution that is significantly different from what was expected. When one takes into consideration the fact that the poll was designed to get an

understanding of female interest in community tourism, this gender gap becomes very noteworthy. It is possible that the inadequate presence of women will have an effect on the comprehensiveness of the insights made into their particular perspectives, preferences, and potential contributions to efforts pertaining to sustainable tourism.

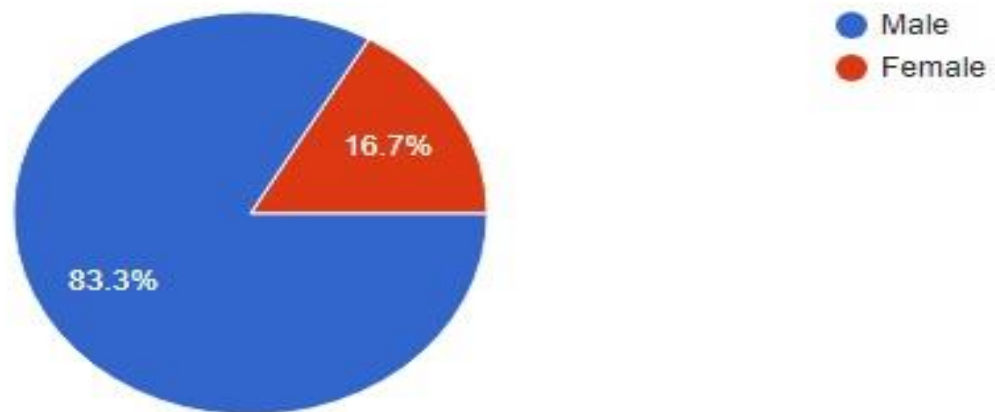


Figure 20: Participants Group

Figure 21 displays the age distribution of the survey participants. Among the 24 participants, there was one individual aged 21, another aged 22, and a third aged 23, respectively, accounting for 12.6% of the whole survey population. There were two individuals, one aged 24 and the other aged 25, making up 16.6% of the total number of participants. For the age groups 26 and 28, there were two participants who constituted a combined proportion of 8.4%. Between the ages of 29 and 31, there were 5 individuals,

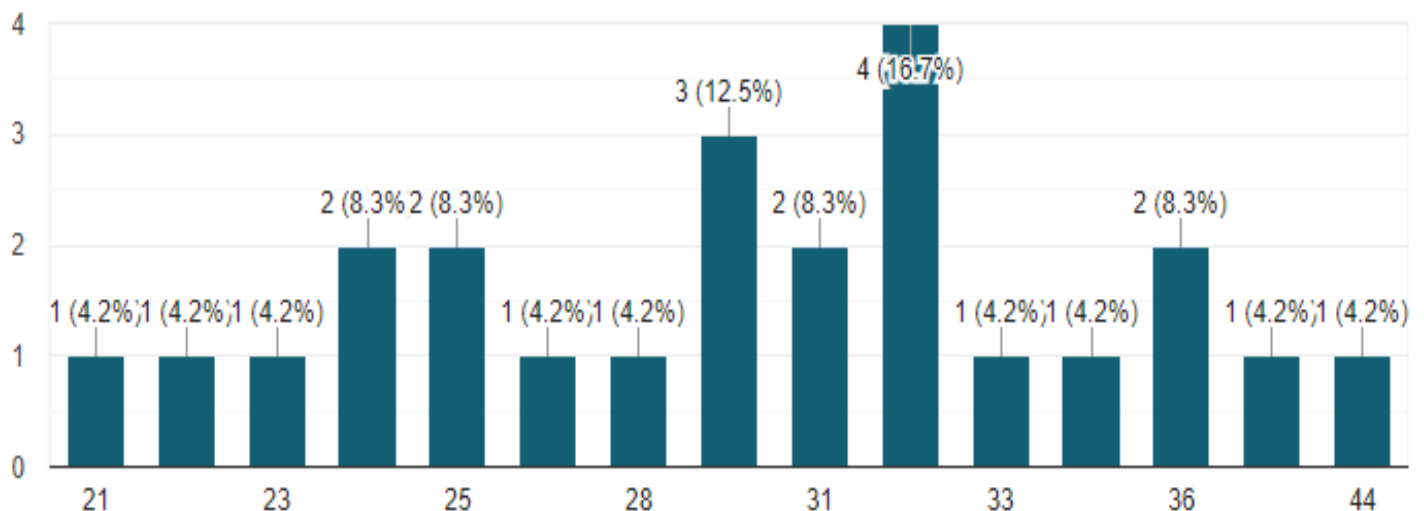


Figure 21: Age Groups by Years

constituting 20.8% of the total participants. Furthermore, there were four individuals who were 32 years old, accounting for 16.7% of the total number of participants. There was one participant between the ages of 33 and 44, except for the age of 36 when there were two participants. The age discrepancy yielded optimal outcomes since it allowed for the collection and presentation of perspectives from diverse age cohorts.

The survey findings provide a thorough summary of the employment histories of the participants, classified into four primary groups: students, private service professionals, public service workers, and persons classified as 'other'. These results are crucial for comprehending the varied viewpoints that various occupational groups provide to the discussion of sustainable tourism development via community involvement in Bangladesh. The data reveals a notable pattern, with the majority of respondents belonging to the private service sector, accounting for 58.3% of the sample, while students make up 37.5% of the participants. The acknowledgement of the prominent influence of private service providers and the active participation of students emphasizes the need for customized strategies in sustainable tourism policies and practices in Bangladesh.

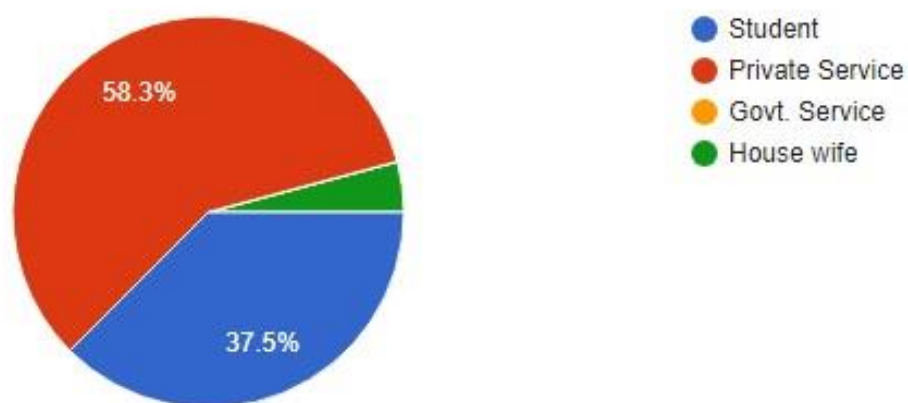


Figure 22: Occupation Group

The survey also included individuals who had been in the nation for varying durations, ranging from 1 year to 35 years. The diversity in residence durations has provided valuable insights into tourism in Bangladesh, including its positive and negative impacts, as well as its significance. Four participants had resided for a duration of three years, accounting for 18.2% of the whole survey population. Two members have each resided for four and five years, respectively, which together make for a total of nine percent of the replies. There are 4 individuals who have been in Bangladesh for a period ranging from 6 to 10 years.

These individuals make up 18.2% of the entire survey population, which consists of 22 replies. Between the ages of 11 and 32, there are six individuals who have survived for this

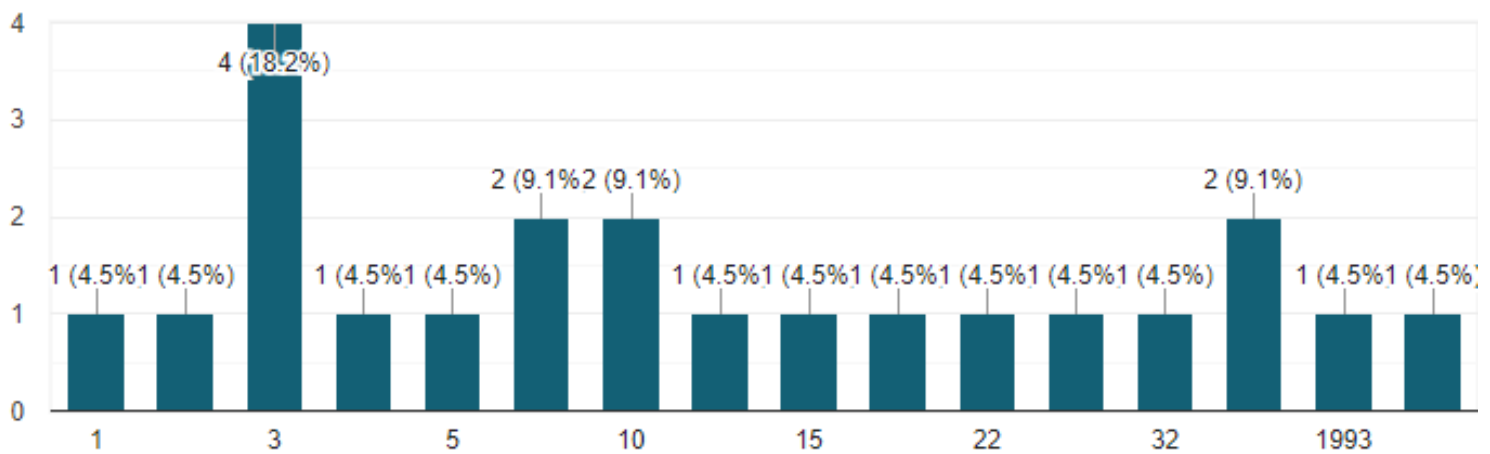


Figure 23: Years of Residency of the Survey Participants in Bangladesh

duration, representing a cumulative total of 27% of the overall outcomes. There are four individuals who have resided for over 32 years, and they account for 18.15% of the overall results.

4.1.2 Results and Analysis of Survey Findings

Are you aware of the concept of sustainable tourism?

The objective of sustainable tourism is to optimize the beneficial outcomes that tourism brings to communities, cultures, and the environment, while reducing the adverse consequences it has on these aspects. The objective of this undertaking is to guarantee that tourist activities are conducted in a manner that conserves the natural and cultural resources of a specific location, fosters social and economic advantages for the local population, and mitigates the overall impact on the environment. The significance of this

question lies in the fact that it was intended to determine whether or not the participants are familiar with the notion of sustainable tourism. Surprisingly, all of the participants were aware of this concept, which makes the findings of this survey more credible and authentic.

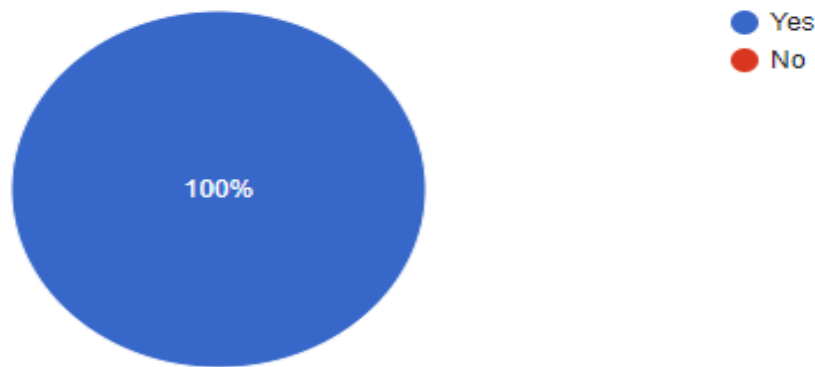


Figure 24: Sustainable Tourism Concept Answers

What are the positive impacts of tourism on your community? (Open-ended)

When this issue is taken into consideration, the replies to the poll highlight the many advantages that tourism offers to the local population, including the contribution it makes to the growth of the economy, society, culture, and the environment.

One of the most obvious results of tourism is the increase in the number of possibilities available in the economy. Those who participated in the survey pointed to a rise in the number of work prospects, revenue production, and contribution to GDP. Not only has the flood of visitors been beneficial to the local economy, but it has also served as a catalyst for the expansion of smaller companies.

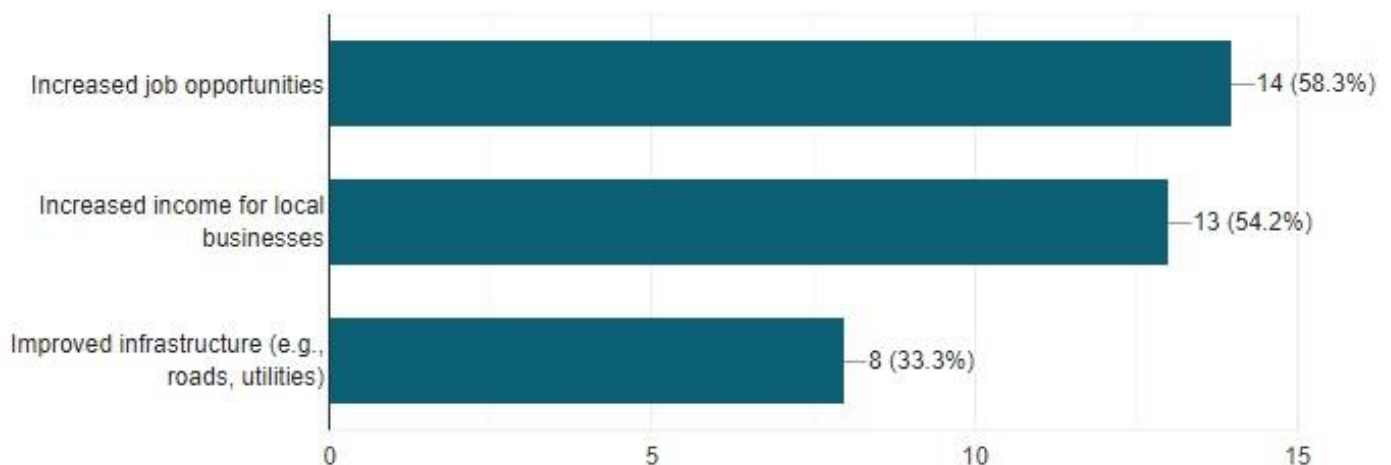


Figure 25: Factors Contributing to Tourism Development

The improvement of infrastructure is intimately connected to the development of community tourism. A number of good results, including improved roads, expressways, and transportation facilities, were identified as contributing to an overall improvement in the living standards of communities. It is widely acknowledged that the expenditures made by the government in these regions are of utmost importance in order to accommodate both the expanding number of visitors and the locals.

The capacity of tourism to act as a medium for the exchange of cultural ideas is an important function of tourism. The respondents pointed out that tourism helps to promote the local culture and history, and it often uses traditional art and food as a means of commercialization. Not only can the exposure of local services to an international stage bring about economic advantages, but it also assists in the development of a feeling of pride within the community being served.

It has been shown that tourism may not only enhance communal relationships but also offer social services. In addition to this, it has developed into a driving force for the preservation of the environment. A strong emphasis was placed on environmentally responsible tourist practices, which brought to light the significance of preserving the fragile equilibrium that exists between economic expansion and ecological preservation.

It has been acknowledged that there is a substantial positive association between tourism and increased security measures. The rise in activities linked to security helps to create a safer atmosphere for both residents and tourists, which in turn helps to build a feeling of well-being via the environment.

A number of respondents recognized, from their own personal perspectives, the essential part that tourism plays in the overall growth of the nation. In order to provide concrete instances of progress, recent advancements such as the construction of new highways, expressways, and metro rail were referenced. In addition, there is a lot of optimism over the possibility of future developments, such as the construction of a whole new subway system.

Individuals are able to generate revenue via tourism, which in turn contributes to the general development of communities. Tourism has become an essential financial resource

for local economies. It does this by providing people with the opportunity to investigate new possibilities, both on a local and a global scale, which ultimately results in an improvement in the quality of life.

Have you noticed any negative impacts of tourism on your community? (Open-ended)

Despite the fact that tourism is associated with a multitude of favorable consequences, it is not devoid of difficulties. According to the comments on the negative effects that tourism has on local communities in Bangladesh, a significant number of respondents (58.3%) admitted to experiencing negative impacts in their communities, whereas 41.7% of respondents thought that tourism did not have any negative impacts. A number of significant problems are brought to light by the concerns that are voiced by those who see unfavorable repercussions.

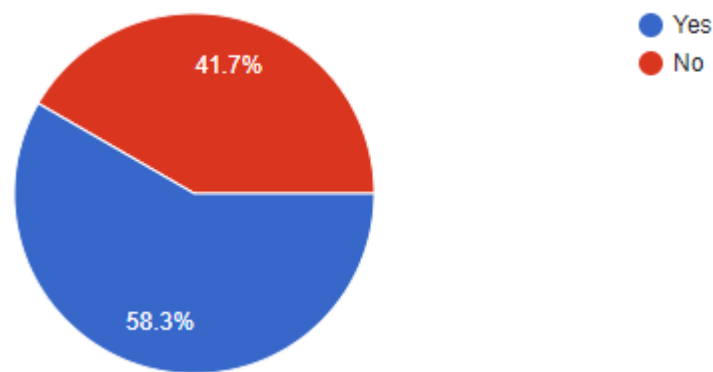


Figure 26: Negative Impacts of Community Tourism

The findings of the poll indicate that the majority of respondents, which accounts for 58.3% of the total, have seen negative consequences that tourism has had on their communities. All of these issues are varied and cover a wide range of topics, including the following:

Environmental Sustainability: Considering the concerns expressed by the respondents on environmental pollution, soil erosion, habitat loss, and the effects on endangered species, it is clear that sustainable practices are required in the tourist development industry.

Infrastructure Development and Cost Management: When it comes to the development of infrastructure, the need of taking a balanced approach is highlighted by the fact that

increasing product prices, tolls on megastructures, and the growing debt of the nation as a result of tourism-related expenditures are all mentioned.

Cultural Preservation: The worry about cultural erosion, which is impacted by the attire and lifestyle of visitors, highlights the need of keeping the distinctive cultural identity of the community that is located in the area.

Public Health Considerations: The fact that the possibility for the transmission of illnesses due to gatherings of people of different nationalities is brought up highlights how important it is to include public health concerns into the design of tourist activities.

Community Annoyance and Littering: The necessity for community engagement in tourism management is brought to light by concerns over the conduct of visitors that led to displeasure among residents as well as the inappropriate disposal of rubbish produced by tourists.

Crime and Social Issues: It is clear that community involvement is required to address safety issues, as seen by the rise in crime rates that are reported in connection with tourist activities.

What are the negative impacts you have noticed?

There is a range of negative repercussions linked with tourism, which is shown by the comments from thirteen participants. These responses offer insight into environmental, social, economic, and cultural difficulties. One of the concerns that was brought up often by respondents was the impact that tourism had on the environment. Tourism-related activities have been identified as having a number of negative repercussions, including but not limited to increased pollution, soil erosion, habitat loss, and environmental stress on endangered species. The intricate link that exists between tourism and ecological balance is further highlighted by specific examples of environmental deterioration, such as the depletion of marine resources and the contamination of the air.

A range of negative effects related to tourism is shown by the comments from thirteen participants, which shed light on concerns pertaining to the environment, society, the economy, and culture. The damaging effects that tourism has on the environment are a topic that has been brought up often by responders. Tourism-related activities have been

identified as having a number of negative repercussions, including but not limited to increased pollution, soil erosion, habitat loss, and pressure on endangered species. Further elaboration on the intricate link between tourism and ecological equilibrium is provided by specific examples of environmental deterioration, such as the depletion of marine resources and the contamination of the air.

The correlation between tourism and a rise in crime rates is a point of observation that is particularly noticeable. As a result of the flood of visitors, respondents said that rowdy conduct, the use of alcohol and drugs, and loud noise are often connected with the situation. The potential burden that this may have on local law enforcement is brought to light, and it also raises issues about the appropriate balance between the economic rewards and the social costs.

Not only are economic considerations pushed to the forefront, but there are also worries over the debt that the government has accrued for tourism-related projects. Participants bring attention to the long-term financial ramifications and tolls that are linked with mega-structures. They provide instances of situations in which the burden of repaying loans and tolls stretches over a period of many years.

Concerns about the environment and culture extend to the ecological imbalance that has been caused by the growth of infrastructure associated to tourism. Participants express concerns about the degradation of natural areas in order to accommodate tourists, highlighting the difficult balance that has to be maintained between accommodating tourists and maintaining natural resources.

The global dimension of tourism is highlighted by worries over the possible spread of illnesses because of the convergence of people from a variety of ethnicities in a single location. The effect on local culture is also stressed, and there are concerns that the cultural fabric of the local community may be eroded as a result of the influence of other options for clothing and lifestyle that come from people of different nations.

In conclusion, it is seen that some visitors exhibit unfavorable conduct, as shown by complaints about the inappropriate disposal of garbage and the act of littering. Not only does this contribute to the damage of the environment, but it also causes irritation among

the local community, which highlights the need for responsible and sustainable tourist activities.

The core of these comments is that they together offer a complex picture of the dual nature of tourism, which is that it brings economic advantages to the areas that it affects while also posing difficulties to the ecology, culture, and social fabric of those places. This highlights the need of implementing tourist methods that are both sustainable and responsible in order to reduce the negative effects of tourism and to cultivate a harmonious connection between tourism and the communities that are accommodated by it.

In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of tourism on your community?

The comments from the 22 individuals who took part in the study shed light on a comprehensive range of beneficial benefits that tourism has on the areas in which they are located. Throughout the comments, one of the most common themes that emerged was the economic benefit that tourism brought about. A significant number of responders highlight the increase in employment prospects, providing evidence that tourism is a driving force behind economic expansion. This economic infusion is considered to have several facets, as it not only contributes to the creation of jobs but also to the general improvement of the local economy. This is shown by significant increases in gross domestic product (GDP), profits in foreign currency, and the promotion of small enterprises. The interdependence of these economic gains is highlighted by the ripple effect that is felt across a variety of sectors, which eventually results in an improvement in the community's quality of life.

The transformational impact that tourism plays in the development of infrastructure is another significant element that those who responded to the survey acknowledged. The beneficial effects extend beyond the area of economics and include observable enhancements to the infrastructure of the local community. The participants point out that the development of new highways, expressways, metro rail systems, and tunnels are direct results of tourism. Consequently, this highlights the symbiotic link that exists between tourism and infrastructure, in which the flood of tourists needs changes to suit the increased demands on transportation and accessibility. Not only does the developing infrastructure provide to the immediate requirements of visitors, but it also provides

advantages to the local people, so contributing to the development of a community that is more linked and more advanced.

The cultural and social advantages that tourism brings about are highlighted by respondents, in addition to the economic and infrastructure benefits that tourism brings about. As a result of tourism serving as a conduit between local populations and tourists, cultural interaction occurs as a beneficial effect. It has been shown that tourism may play a role in the preservation of traditions and the development of a feeling of community identity. One of the social benefits that tourism can provide is the preservation of local culture and history. Furthermore, it is widely understood that the commercialization of culture and art is a method that not only allows for the preservation of local originality and history but also serves to promote it.

The replies to the poll, taken as a whole, provide a picture of tourism as a multidimensional force that has far-reaching beneficial benefits on communities. The participants offer a complex picture of how tourism, when handled properly, may act as a catalyst for comprehensive community development. This includes everything from economic growth and infrastructural development to cultural interchange and environmental sustainability.

Have you or any community members been directly involved in tourism-related activities or initiatives?

According to the responses to this question, 70.8% of the participants said that they had been directly engaged in activities linked to tourism, while 29.2% of the participants stated that they did not have any direct connection to the tourist industry. A significant number of individuals who have a direct connection to tourism and the activities that are associated with it demonstrate the effectiveness of the findings, since the majority of individuals have practical understanding of the questions that were being asked of them.

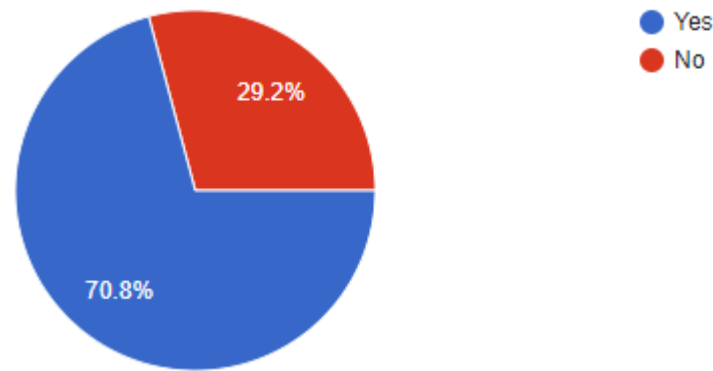


Figure 27: Direct Involvement in Tourism

How do you feel about being involved in tourism-related activities?

There is reason to be optimistic about the community's ability to sustainably expand tourism, as shown by the high proportion of respondents (52.2%) who expressed a significant interest in activities linked to tourism. This interest has the potential to serve as a basis for the development of a feeling of ownership and pride among the local populace in relation to the tourist business.

Furthermore, the fact that just three percent of respondents said that they were not interested in tourism-related initiatives is indicative of a generally favorable attitude toward these kinds of undertakings. Even those who have shown a modest level of interest are likely to be open to the concept of taking part in activities associated with tourism, but to differing degrees than they first expressed.

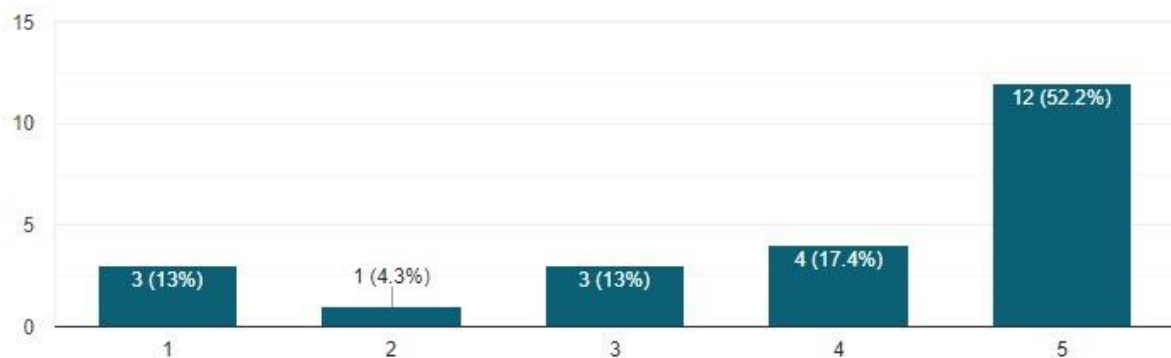


Figure 28: Community Participation in Tourism Activities

The significant degree of interest presents a chance to use community engagement in the process of planning, making decisions, and carrying out sustainable tourism projects. Involving the community in this way may help foster the growth of tourism that is both economically sustainable and socially and ecologically conscious.

What kind of impact did you think? (Open-ended)

As shown by the findings of the poll, an overwhelming majority of respondents, which accounts for 87.5% of the total, are of the opinion that tourism has, in fact, had an effect on the environment in their communities. The local populace has come to the realization that tourist operations have left a discernible mark on the natural surroundings, and this overwhelming consensus highlights the acknowledgment of this fact.

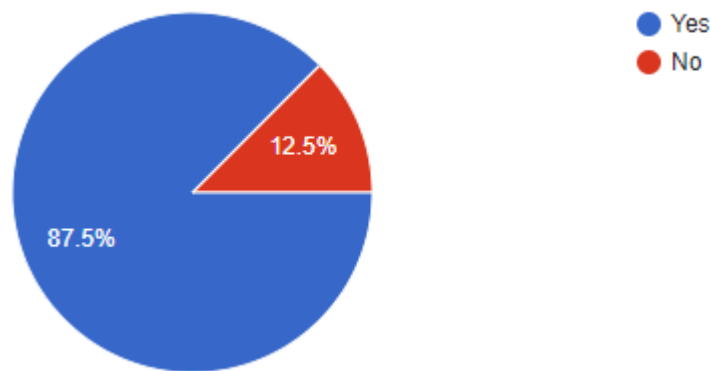


Figure 29: Environmental Concerns

A nuanced comprehension of the environmental effect that tourism has on their town is shown by the varied replies that were provided by the individuals who participated in the survey. One thing that is consistent throughout all of the reactions is the acknowledgment of the adverse effects, which include pollution, climate change, and disruptions to the ecosystems in the vicinity. Participants highlight concerns about increasing trash output, water consumption, noise pollution, habitat destruction, and the loss of natural resources. They also emphasize the significance of resolving these problems in order to expand tourism in a sustainable manner. There is little doubt that the community is aware of the possible environmental hazards that are linked with tourism, and this understanding creates the framework for making decisions that are both educated and responsible.

On the other hand, there are some respondents who accept the good features of tourism, highlighting its role in the development of local and rural areas, the creation of jobs, and the advancement of economic growth. The dual character of tourism's influence is shown by the fact that it is recognized as both a source of money and a promoter of cultural variety.

The responses from different individuals provide a comprehensive view of the several ways that tourism impacts communities. Aspects pertaining to infrastructure, culture, the economy, and the environment are all part of these influences. Concerns about pollution, global warming, and depletion of natural resources are common themes when discussing human impact on the environment. Despite tourism's beneficial effects on rural and local communities' growth, the majority of respondents agree that it often causes environmental problems. Among these difficulties are the following: damage to local ecosystems, increased garbage production, and pollution from transportation. The substantial negative impact on the environment is a well-known fact. We utilize water, produce trash, introduce noise pollution, lose habitat, and upset animals because of these repercussions. A careful approach is necessary when dealing with tourism because of the delicate balance that exists between the positive economic aspects, like creating jobs and money, and the negative economic features, such as the possible harm that tourism may do to the environment.

Respondents overwhelmingly highlight the economic factor, praising the benefits to local economies, new jobs, and income levels. In addition to boosting local cultures and adding to economic progress, tourism is believed to be a job creator, especially in rural regions. While recognizing the need of careful management to minimize negative repercussions, it is emphasized that tourism has the ability to boost a region's economy.

Among the many positive outcomes that tourism has the potential to provide, the promotion of cultural variety and intercultural understanding stands out. By bringing attention to the positive effects that tourism may have on local economies and cultures, the participants draw attention to the many ways in which it promotes cultural diversity and fosters mutual understanding. Some are concerned about the detrimental cultural effects, while others are worried about the decline of local traditions and the impact on towns' infrastructure and demographics. Concerns about these matters have been voiced by a few attendees.

This is consistent with the recognition that excessive tourism may have a negative impact on the environment if it is not managed thoroughly. The dual character of tourism, which includes both good and bad elements, is emphasized once again, with a particular focus on the significance of adopting sustainable methods in order to guarantee long-term advantages without jeopardizing the well-being of people and the environment.

In conclusion, the answers to the study clearly highlight the multifaceted and varied nature of the effects that tourism has on communities. Despite the fact that tourism has the potential to bring about good change, cultural interchange, and economic growth, it also presents a number of obstacles, notably with regard to the preservation of the environment. An overarching theme that runs through all of the replies is the significance of implementing tourist methods that are both responsible and sustainable. This highlights the need for a strategy that is both balanced and aware in order to capitalize on the positive aspects of tourism while also minimizing its negative effects.

Are there any conservation efforts in place to protect natural resources affected by tourism?

The findings of the survey indicate that there is a lack of consensus on the presence of conservation activities in the community that are created with the intention of safeguarding natural resources that are impacted by tourism. 33.3 percent of respondents did not detect any conservation activities in place, despite the fact that 66.7% of respondents had seen conservation initiatives in existence, which indicates a degree of proactive participation.

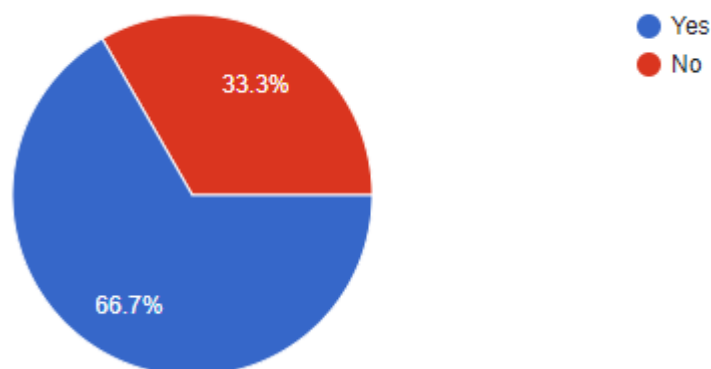


Figure 30: Conservation Efforts

What efforts did you notice to protect natural resources?

A major focus is placed on public awareness and proactive actions to promote sustainable tourism practices, as shown by the replies from a variety of participants. One of the repeating themes is the significance of public knowledge in the process of encouraging actions that are ecologically sensitive. As vital actions that people may do to contribute to sustainability, the respondents propose that persons engage in activities such as recycling, using energy-efficient lighting, avoiding packaging that cannot be recycled, and making use of renewable energy sources of energy. There is also a mention of awareness initiatives that were started by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and tourist police, which highlights the importance of education in the process of encouraging ecologically responsible practices.

At the same time, participants acknowledge the significance of conservation efforts in safeguarding natural resources that are impacted by tourist initiatives. There are a number of activities that have been recognized as common methods. These include ecotourism techniques, protected areas and reserves, education and awareness campaigns, community engagement, and legislation and policies. This exemplifies the collaborative effort that has been made to strike a balance between tourism and environmental protection, and it highlights the need of putting in place rules and standards within the industry to govern sustainable practices.

The answers give rise to a feeling of responsibility with regard to the reduction of the carbon footprint and the preservation of natural resources. It is important to stress the fact that waste reduction programs and eco-friendly lodgings are examples of practical actions that have been made to address environmental problems in the tourist sector. Offsetting carbon emissions, reducing the number of flights taken, using public transit, and providing support to local businesses are some of the ways that participants say visitors and locals alike would contribute to the cause.

An emphasis is placed on the value of regulations and guidelines, with respondents pointing out the significance of assuming rules and regulations, adhering to them in a stringent manner, and consistently promoting them to newcomers and inhabitants. The adoption of industry standards, such as the GSTC industry criteria, for the protection of cultural heritage and wildlife is also recognized as a major step towards the practice of sustainable tourism.

While certain individuals acknowledge the endeavors undertaken by numerous establishments in adopting water-conservation practices, installing low-flow faucets, utilizing energy-efficient lighting, and employing environmentally friendly cleaning products, others adopt a more cautious perspective, contending that not all destinations have made substantial advancements in this domain.

Ultimately, the comments highlight the crucial need for public awareness, education, and proactive steps in promoting sustainable tourism practices. Participants emphasize a variety of measures, including individual habits such as recycling and decreasing carbon footprints, as well as community-based programs and industry standards. The dedication to achieving an equilibrium between sustainable tourism and environmental preservation is clearly apparent, underscoring the need of a collective endeavor to guarantee the enduring viability of the tourist sector.

The variety of observations made by the respondents about the different ways that are being taken to safeguard natural resources in the face of the consequences of tourism highlight the numerous approaches that are being implemented. Initiatives aimed at raising public awareness, efforts to reduce trash, and lodgings that are environmentally friendly are examples of proactive actions leading to sustainability. The necessity of strategic planning and legislation is brought to light by the fact that ecotourism techniques, protected areas, and community engagement are all mentioned. The development of a feeling of responsibility among both residents and visitors is facilitated by the efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), tourism police, and awareness initiatives. Furthermore, the focus placed on promoting activities that are ecologically sensitive, aiding with local companies, and complying with laws and regulations exemplifies a collective commitment to reducing the negative effect that tourism has on the environment. A major method for accomplishing the sustainable tourism objectives mentioned in this thesis on community participation in sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh is to include such practices in tourist rules and regulations. In addition, continual public education is also an important component of this strategy.

What challenges or barriers do you think hinder community members' participation in tourism-related activities? (Open-ended)

The diverse replies from those who took part in the survey shed light on a spectrum of obstacles and hurdles that prevent members of the community from participating in activities linked to tourism. The lack of knowledge and awareness, the limited resources available, and the inadequate assistance from either the government or the business sector are all among the most common obstacles. There are a number of cultural and social elements that are considered to be major obstacles. These include variations in behavior between visitors and residents, language problems, and dangers to indigenous cultures or traditions. Other factors that add to the complexity of the situation surrounding community engagement in tourism include worries about safety and security as well as the effects on the environment.

It is important to recognize that corruption can be a barrier in certain situations, and this underscores the necessity of having governance that is both transparent and responsible in order to develop confidence within the community. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on economic constraints and the unequal distribution of costs and profits highlights the requirement of equitable models that guarantee local people will receive fair returns as a result of tourism projects. Within the scope of this thesis, it is possible to delve into these multifaceted issues, providing ways for overcoming hurdles, boosting community education, and supporting collaborative efforts that empower local citizens in the process of sustainable tourist development. As a result of addressing these difficulties, the thesis has the potential to contribute to the development of a tourism model that is more inclusive and beneficial for communities in Bangladesh.

In your opinion, how can the community play a more active role in shaping tourism development to ensure long-term sustainability? (Open-ended)

The vast amount of information that was provided by the respondents highlights the crucial part that local communities may play in determining the direction that tourist development will take in order to ensure its long-term viability. The importance of active community participation is emphasized throughout the comments, which echoes feelings of empowerment, collaboration, and unity. This is a common thread that runs across the responses. Participatory planning, the preservation of cultural traditions, education, and awareness are among the key strategies that have been recognized. A strategy that takes a comprehensive perspective on sustainable development is shown in the emphasis placed on community-based tourist activities. These initiatives include networking, the promotion

of local products, and the establishment of rules. The thesis places an emphasis on community engagement as a means of achieving sustainable tourism in Bangladesh. The call for a good and open environment, friendly behavior with tourists, and assuring safety and security is in line with this focus.

Furthermore, the recognition of the significance of education and training in the field of tourism sustainability lends support to the premise of the thesis, which states that the process of cultivating knowledge and awareness is necessary to achieve success over the long term. The awareness by the responders of the urgent need for environmentally friendly infrastructure, the protection of species, and the maintenance of environmental sustainability are in line with the overarching objectives of developing a tourist model that is both responsible and balanced. As the thesis investigates the role that local communities play in shaping tourism development, it can make use of these valuable insights to advocate for inclusive decision-making processes, community empowerment, and a collaborative approach to guarantee a future for tourism in Bangladesh that is both sustainable and mutually beneficial.

4.2 Summary of Findings

The findings from the survey present a comprehensive overview of the community's perceptions and experiences related to tourism in Bangladesh, shedding light on both the positive and negative aspects. In terms of positive impacts, respondents highlighted the creation of job opportunities, economic growth, and infrastructure development. The community expressed a strong interest in tourism-related activities, with the majority recognizing the benefits and opportunities tourism brings. However, there is a significant acknowledgment of the negative impacts, including environmental degradation, increased pollution, and challenges like the rising cost of living and cultural erosion.

Notably, respondents observed ongoing conservation efforts to protect natural resources, though awareness gaps still exist. Challenges hindering community participation in tourism-related activities include a lack of education, limited resources, and concerns about the unequal distribution of costs and benefits. The community, nevertheless, demonstrated a keen interest in playing an active role in shaping sustainable tourism development. Proposed strategies include active participation in decision-making, cultural

preservation, community-based tourism initiatives, and fostering awareness through education.

After all, the community's nuanced understanding of the complexities surrounding tourism in Bangladesh provides a strong foundation for the thesis on sustainable tourism development through community engagement. The findings underscore the need for inclusive and transparent approaches that address both positive and negative aspects, ensuring that tourism benefits local communities while minimizing its environmental and social impact. The thesis can leverage these insights to propose actionable strategies for achieving long-term sustainability in tourism through collaborative efforts and community empowerment.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

The procedure for the study was carried out in a manner that was committed to adhering to ethical norms. All the participants were asked for their informed consent in order to guarantee that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they remained anonymous. During the research, the cultural norms and sensibilities of the surrounding areas were taken into consideration, and efforts were made to minimize any potential adverse consequences. To gather information from reliable sources, namely from persons who have a greater level of competence, a comprehensive survey that included open-ended questions was utilized.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

The journey through the exploration of sustainable tourism development through community engagement in the context of Bangladesh has provided valuable insights into the intricate interplay between local communities, cultural heritage, natural resources, and the tourism industry. This thesis sought to uncover the various dimensions of community involvement, ranging from socio-economic impacts to environmental stewardship, and to identify challenges, barriers, and opportunities for enhancing sustainable practices.

According to the findings of the economic research, tourism has the potential to act as a driver of economic expansion, opening up chances for local populations to engage in entrepreneurial endeavors and to find employment. On the other hand, considerable attention should be given to the overall quality of these advantages as well as their consistency over the long run. The cultural ramifications were found to be both rewarding and demanding. This is due to the fact that the potential of tourism to encourage cultural interaction has to be balanced with the preservation of real cultural identities.

The inquiry into environmental conservation focused significant emphasis on the pivotal role that communities play in safeguarding natural resources. The promotion of ecotourism and community-based approaches to resource management have emerged as potentially fruitful ways for preserving biodiversity while also generating economic rewards. The relevance of inclusive decision-making and cooperation between communities, government authorities, and industry stakeholders was brought to light in the chapter that focused on community engagement to emphasize its significance.

A lack of understanding, limited resources, competing livelihoods, and external pressures are some of the difficulties that need to be addressed by focused interventions. These challenges and impediments brought to light the need of such interventions. Despite the fact that these hurdles are daunting, they provide opportunity for collaborative solutions that might enable communities to successfully manage the obstacles that are associated with tourist growth. The chapter on suggestions includes actionable steps that might be taken to achieve sustainable community participation. These steps included pushing for educational efforts, robust governance structures, community-based businesses, and policies that stress environmental responsibility and diversity.

In conclusion, this thesis has shed light on the multifaceted relationship between local communities and sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh. It has provided a comprehensive understanding of how community engagement can enhance the positive impacts of tourism while mitigating its negatives. By fostering meaningful participation, valuing cultural heritage, promoting environmental stewardship, and addressing challenges, the future of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh can be shaped collaboratively, ensuring that both communities and visitors thrive in harmony with their surroundings. The insights gained from this thesis contribute to the broader global conversation on responsible tourism, offering a foundation for policy development, stakeholder collaboration, and further research in pursuit of a sustainable and equitable future.

5.1 Implications for sustainable tourism development

The survey's consequences are crucial for understanding how Bangladesh's sustainable tourism industry is developing. The positive responses affirm the potential of tourism to contribute to

- Economic growth
- Job creation
- Infrastructure development

Recognizing these benefits suggests that fostering a supportive environment for sustainable tourism can lead to enhanced economic opportunities and improved living standards for local communities.

On the flip side, the acknowledgement of negative impacts, especially environmental degradation and cultural erosion, emphasizes the imperative for a strategic and responsible approach to tourism development. The identified conservation efforts indicate a growing awareness of the need to protect natural resources. The implications here underscore the importance of reinforcing and expanding such initiatives, incorporating community-driven conservation practices, and leveraging them as integral components of sustainable tourism policies.

The challenges highlighted by respondents, ranging from a lack of education to concerns about unequal benefits, underscore the need for targeted interventions. The implications for sustainable tourism development involve investing in educational programs to raise

awareness about eco-friendly practices, providing training to enhance community skills, and formulating policies that ensure a fair distribution of the economic gains from tourism.

The overall implications for sustainable tourism development based on the survey findings point toward a holistic and community-centric approach. This involves balancing the positive economic impacts of tourism with robust conservation efforts, educational initiatives, and policies that prioritize the well-being of local communities. By addressing these implications, the thesis can contribute actionable insights to guide the formulation and implementation of policies fostering sustainable tourism development in Bangladesh.

5.2 Future research directions

The current findings provide a robust foundation for future research directions aimed at advancing our understanding of sustainable tourism development through community engagement in Bangladesh. To delve deeper into the complexities identified in the survey responses, future research could explore the specific mechanisms by which communities can actively participate in decision-making processes related to tourism planning and development. This involves

- Investigating the efficacy of participatory planning models
- Evaluating the impact of community-based tourism initiatives
- Understanding the dynamics of cultural preservation within the tourism context.

Moreover, given the importance of education and awareness highlighted by respondents, future research could focus on designing and implementing targeted educational programs. Assessing the effectiveness of these programs in enhancing community knowledge about sustainable tourism practices and their role in preserving local culture and environment could be a valuable area of investigation. Additionally, exploring innovative strategies for bridging awareness gaps and promoting eco-friendly behaviors within the community could contribute to more sustainable tourism practices.

Furthermore, a deeper examination of the challenges hindering community participation, such as the unequal distribution of costs and benefits, could inform policy recommendations and frameworks that ensure a fair and equitable distribution of the economic benefits of tourism. Lastly, a longitudinal study tracking the evolution of

community perceptions and engagement over time could provide insights into the long-term impact of sustainable tourism initiatives and community engagement efforts.

By delving into these future research directions, the thesis can contribute not only to the academic discourse on sustainable tourism development but also offer practical insights for policymakers, local communities, and industry stakeholders in shaping the future of tourism in Bangladesh.

5.3 Recommendations for Sustainable Community Engagement

Educational and Training Initiatives

- ✓ Develop educational programs to raise awareness among community members about the potential benefits and risks of tourism.
- ✓ Provide training in hospitality, cultural interpretation, and sustainable resource management to enhance the capacity of community members to actively participate in tourism-related activities.
- ✓ Collaborate with educational institutions and NGOs to offer workshops and skill development sessions. (Wisdom, 2023)

Strengthening Local Governance Structures

- ✓ Establish or strengthen community-based tourism committees or associations to facilitate communication between communities and tourism stakeholders.
- ✓ Promote transparent decision-making processes that involve community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of tourism initiatives.
- ✓ Advocate for policies that recognize the rights of local communities and empower them to negotiate fair terms with external investors and developers. (Kim, Khalid, Ahmed, T. Ramayah, & Hwang, 2019)

Promoting Community-based Tourism Enterprises

- ✓ Encourage the creation of community-owned and operated tourism enterprises, such as homestays, guided tours, and artisan workshops.
- ✓ Facilitate access to microfinance and funding opportunities to support the establishment and growth of community-based businesses.
- ✓ Foster partnerships with tourism operators who value and respect community interests and contribute to local economic development. (Kim, Khalid, Ahmed, T. Ramayah, & Hwang, 2019)

Advocating for Pro-poor and Inclusive Policies

- ✓ Advocate for policies that prioritize the equitable distribution of benefits from tourism, ensuring that marginalized groups and disadvantaged individuals also benefit.

- ✓ Collaborate with governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement policies that protect the environment and cultural heritage while promoting community well-being.
- ✓ Promote responsible tourism practices among tourists, encouraging respect for local customs, and minimizing negative impacts. (Fong & chiun Lo, 2015)

Implementing these recommendations can foster sustainable community engagement in tourism development, ensuring that local communities are active participants, decision-makers, and beneficiaries in the process. This chapter provides actionable strategies for promoting positive outcomes for both communities and the tourism industry in Bangladesh.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire

Title: Sustainable Tourism Development through Community Engagement- A Study on the Role of Local Communities in Bangladesh

Introduction

Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather insights from local community members about their perceptions and experiences related to sustainable tourism development in your region. Your honest responses will contribute to a better understanding of how local communities can engage in and benefit from tourism while ensuring long-term viability. Your participation is voluntary, and your responses will remain confidential.

Demographic Information

Full Name: _____

Gender: [] Male [] Female [] Other

Age: _____

Occupation: _____

Years of residency in the community: _____

Sustainable Tourism Awareness

5. Are you aware of the concept of sustainable tourism? [] Yes [] No

Tourism Impact on Community

6. How has tourism affected your community's economy?

- ☐ Increased job opportunities
- ☐ Increased income for local businesses
- ☐ Improved infrastructure (e.g., roads, utilities)
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

7. In your opinion, what are the positive impacts of tourism on your community? (Open-ended)

8. Have you noticed any negative impacts of tourism on your community? [] Yes [] No If yes, please describe: What are the negative impacts you have noticed?

Community Participation in Tourism

9. Have you or any community members been directly involved in tourism-related activities or initiatives? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please specify:

10. How do you feel about being involved in tourism-related activities? (Scale: 1 = Not Interested, 5 = Very Interested)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Environmental Concerns

11. Do you think tourism has impacted the environment in your community? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please describe: What kind of impact did you think

12. Are there any conservation efforts in place to protect natural resources affected by tourism? ☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please provide details: What efforts did you notice to protect natural resources? _____

Barriers to Community Engagement

13. What challenges or barriers do you think hinder community members' participation in tourism-related activities? (Open-ended)

Future Aspirations

14. In your opinion, how can the community play a more active role in shaping tourism development to ensure long-term sustainability? (Open-ended)

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is valuable and will contribute to the research on sustainable tourism development. If you have any additional comments or insights, please feel free to share them below.

Additional Comments:

[Text box]