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## AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON RESIDENTS ATTITUDE AND SUPPORT FOR RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT A CASE OF KARAIKUDI, TAMILNADU, INDIA

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### Abstract:

*The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the level of residents' loyalty and residents' attitudes toward tourism in Karaikudi, a rural tourism spot in the state of Tamilnadu. In addition, this study investigated whether age groups and the people vary with the years of residency had different attitudes toward tourism development. The self administered instrument was used and the responses were collected from 200 stakeholders. A factor analysis of 26 attitude items reveals a three-dimensional factor solution. The younger generation people were inclined to perceive more benefits of tourism than the older people. The people who are residing there for more than 20 years tended to have a stronger view of the negative impacts caused as a result of tourism development. The findings could be helpful to government and marketers interested in positioning their rural tourism destination.*

### KEYWORDS:

Rural Tourism, Resident Attitude, Support for Tourism, Tourism Development.

### INTRODUCTION

The Local community participation in tourism development and the factors that may influence their reactions is essential in achieving a host community's support for tourism development. Many tourism researchers (Getz, 1994; Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; Chen, 2000) have extensively studied the residents' reactions towards tourism. These resident attitude studies frequently suggest that local residents' support for community tourism business affects their perception of tourism impacts including economic (Davis, Allen, & Consenza, 1988; Getz, 1986; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990), environmental, social, and cultural elements (Gunn, 1988; Murphy, 1985). Even though many tourism researchers found that residents' support is tied to economic, social, cultural, and environmental consequences, the structural effects of tourism impacts on local residents' and other stakeholders support for tourism business have not been rigorously investigated. In this study the perceived total tourism impact has four impact factors, and each impact factor influences the perception of other impact factors and the perceived total impact in varying degrees and different directions. Therefore, each impact factor has varying effects on local residents' support for tourism development and these effects are mediated by perceived total impact. This study also measures the community participation in tourism development.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Erick T. Byrd and Larry Gustke, (2007) found that stakeholders who are female are more

supportive than male stakeholders and stakeholders who are either residents or tourists are more supportive than the business owners and government officials. He also found that the stakeholders who actively participate in recreational activities extend their support for sustainable tourism.

De Oliveira, (2003) stated that Communities that plan to use tourism as a tool to diversify their economy must develop policies for the sustainable development of the community. Harrill (2004) in his research found that residents who live close to the core of tourism activity have more negative attitudes towards tourism development. Harrill and Potts (2003) investigated the relationships between neighborhood, economic dependency, and tourism, finding that those neighborhoods close to the tourism core had the most negative attitudes towards tourism while neighborhoods further away perceived tourism more positively.

Jurowski and Gursoy (2003) tested a social exchange theory model developed by Gursoy et al. (2002). The test showed that distance from the tourism core effected how residents evaluated the costs and benefits of tourism; people who lived close to the tourism core and were heavy users of resources were more likely to evaluate tourism exchanges negatively and were less likely to support tourism development.

Pizam (1978) and Williams and Lawson (2001) found that those people living close to tourism facilities and services had more negative attitudes towards the effects of tourism. Andereck and Vogt (2000) and Brunt and Courtney (1999) in their research investigated the relationship between stakeholders (residents, visitors, business owners, or government officials) and their perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable tourism. Lane (1994) provided four reasons for sustainable development policies 1.need to implement sustainable management systems, 2.need to mediate between conservation and development, 3.need to encourage community focused economic growth and 4.need to maintain rurality in the rural areas.

Ap (1990) in his Social Exchange Theory suggests that when an exchange of resources between residents and tourism is high and balanced, tourism impacts are viewed positively by residents and vice versa. Butler (1980) in his Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) Model gives the stages of evolution of destinations. The destination stages are exploration, engagement, consolidation, stagnation and post stagnation with options of rejuvenalization, stabilization to decrease. Doxey (1975) in his Irridex model (euphoria, apathy, disgust, antagonism)represents the escalating irritation of residents as the impact of visitor number increases, type of visitors, length of visit and cultural difference between host and guest.

## **RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA**

Rural tourism is becoming a dominant factor in the rural economy as tourism activity in rural areas has remarkably increased in all developed countries (Fleischer & Pizam 1997). The increase number of rural communities in Western countries that capitalizes tourism as a means of sustainable economic growth and development has successfully enhanced their economic condition (Blaine, Mohammad & Var (1993: 770), especially since the decline in the ability of farm agriculture to generate sufficient income for rural communities (Ying & Zhou 1997). Thus, rural tourism development programs have become evident in many countries as tourism has been considered an effective catalyst for rural socio-economic development and regeneration. Rural tourism is a subset of tourism that would consist of wide range things such as farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural tourism is essentially an activity that takes place in the countryside. Rural tourism creates experiences for tourist who enjoys locations that are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, and it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions. Rural tourism has become quite admired since the last few years. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have partnered the innovative Endogenous Tourism Project during the 10th Five Year Plan, focusing on the rural tourism experience and based on rural art and craft skills, cultural and natural heritage. The Project is being implemented at 31 rural locations in 20 states with community participation through NGO or Panchayat Partners, District Collectors as Focal Points and specialized stakeholders

## **THE CASE OF KARAIKUDI, SIVAGANGA DISTRICT, TAMILNADU**

This research focuses on the Karaikudi, Sivaganga District, Tamilnadu (Figure 1). Karaikudi have experienced tremendous development in public infrastructure and tourism facilities when the place was declared as a Rural Tourism spot by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Many construction projects in Karaikudi have only one purpose: to accommodate rural tourism development. To guide the progress of

rural tourism development in Karaikudi, the government prepared the Structure Plan, which outlined the government policies and strategy for socio-economic and physical planning and development for rural tourism. During the preparation of the Karaikudi Structure Plan, local residents have been provided with an opportunity to give their comment and suggestion. Nevertheless, based on his study, Din (1993) questioned the effectiveness of the public participation process during, since local residents can only participate without influence the decision making-process. Mohd Saad (1998) stated that government administrator has made most of the decisions without public consultation. Due to that, most of issues related to tourism planning and development failed to address the need of local residents (Din 1993, 1997) Therefore, Din (1993) suggested that local residents should be given greater chances to voice their opinions or ideas, despite of shortcomings in implementation approach and the lack of their understanding. Local residents need to be informed of tourism development since the lack of knowledge of tourism might result in the low level of awareness in the participation process and could contribute to negative perceptions. One of the main strategies to improve the living standard of the rural population, in the context of rural tourism development, is the promotion of community enterprise. It is a collective activity initiated by the community themselves to raise socio-economic standards, improve their environment and subsequently uplift their quality of life. Based on the concept of self-help, mutual help and common ownership, the community enterprise encourages the participation of the local community in conceptualizing their development needs and in the decision making over control of scarce economic resources.

#### STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. To find the dimensions of residents attitude towards tourism development.
2. To examine the significant difference among the Age groups, years of residency and the residents attitude towards tourism.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

##### Description of the Instrument

From the review of literature a master list of attributes were developed which theoretically measure Impact and support for tourism. This initial list consisted of 28 attributes. The list was then further modified by conducting a focus group and employing a two-phase pilot study with a convenience sample of community residents. The responses from the focus group and the pilot study were used to generate the final list of attributes. To determine the construct validity of the scale, factor analysis was done and 26 attributes were extracted by using a varimax rotation. A self administered instrument assessing rural residents' attitudes toward tourism development was used in the study. The research variables were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. In reliability test, the cronbach's alpha score for attitude attributes are 0.84 (impacts), 0.89 (benefits), 0.82 (gender equity). The survey questionnaire was pretested with 50 residents of Karaikudi.

In the Qualitative methodology, 30 stakeholders (Governmental officers, community leaders, NGO representative) were interviewed. Open ended questionnaire was used to get the responses. The questions framed are used to identify the approach of the public participation framework, to study the problems when implementing public participation and to know how far the residents are allowed to participate during the involvement program.

##### Data Collection

The study population comprised of community people living in that area, Governmental officials, Academic Faculty and students, Business people both tourism related business and non-related. A stratified random sample of 200 respondents was surveyed. Data was collected by interviewing the respondents between September 2010 and November 2010.

##### Analysis Techniques

We determined similarities and differences in attitudes towards tourism growth and development using a MANOVA test. Differences among groups (Age, Years of residence,) and dependent variables benefits, impacts and gender equity are studied with MANOVA. To measure the construct validity of the impact scale, 26 items were extracted by a factor analysis using a varimax rotation. The items having a loading score lower than 0.40 were excluded from the analysis. The factor with only one item is also

excluded.

### Data Analysis and Discussions

#### Table 1 – about here

Demographic information about the respondents is provided in Table 1. Females account for most respondents (52.5%). More than one half of the respondents (56%) are married, and 35.5% are single. 35.5% of the respondents is highly qualified and 34% respondents have finished elementary schooling. Self employed people accounts for 40.5%. About 59% had an annual household income of less than Rs 10,000. More than half of the stakeholders (56%) are married. 84% of the respondents are doing business not related to tourism.

#### Residents' Attitudes towards Tourism

#### Table 2– about here

The descriptive measures means and standard deviations of the 28-item attitude scale are presented in Table 2. Respondents were most likely to agree that (a) Wider promotion of handicraft items made in the village, (b) Formation of activity based groups and self help groups, benefiting women community c) Mobilization of women artisans in the active participation in the tourism programme, (d) Tourism has encouraged a variety of cultural exchange between tourists and residents e) Effective skill building of the women community f) Development of common platform for crafts persons to display and sell their local arts and crafts, and the respondents were disagreed with the following statements: (a) Tourism improves public utilities (e.g. roads, telecommunication) in the community, (b) Development of institution like Gurukul platform to learners and teachers, and (c) Tourism has resulted in more crime rates.

#### Table 3– about here

Factor analysis helps to create new factors of homogeneous sets or in other words to reduce many variables in to manageable number. To proceed with factor analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were performed (see Table 3). The result of the KMO is greater than 0.7 at 0.881 and Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at a level of .001 ( $\chi^2 = 1927$ ,  $df = 210$ ), therefore it seems that factor analysis is suitable for this data set. From factor analysis, three factors labeled 1. benefits 2. impacts, and 3. gender equity were extracted with 60.31% of the total variance merged from the analysis. The two variables, Local labor, technology and resources being optimally utilized and Tourism create more jobs for outsiders than for local people were eliminated from the analysis since the loadings were less than 0.5. The total variance explained by benefit factor is 30.44% and a Cronbach's alpha is 0.86 (Should be greater than 0.6). The Cronbach's alpha is to measure the internal consistency of the mean of items. Sixteen items explained in the benefit factor listed in Table: 3. The impacts factor explains 18.66% of the total variance, and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.83. The impact factor has 6 items listed in (Table: 3). The equity factor accounts for 11.22% of the total variance, and exhibits a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. Gender equity factor has 4 items and it is listed in (see Table: 3)

#### Table 4 – about here

#### Table 5 – about here

MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of variance) is used to analyse data that involves more than one dependent variable at a time. MANOVA is to test hypothesis regarding the effect of one or more independent variables on two or more dependent variables. Here by using the MANOVA test the effect of age and years of residence (independent variables) on the attitude like Benefit, Impact and Gender Equity (dependent variables). From the MANOVA test it is found that residents in different age groups had significant differences in their attitudes toward tourism development (see Table 4). The post hoc test with Duncan statistics ( $p < .05$ ) shows that people with age group between 25 and 44 differed significantly in perceived benefits from those who are above 65. This implies that the younger generation was inclined to perceive more benefits (mean=2.9351) of tourism than the older people. The people with 6-10 years of residence differed significantly in perceived benefits with the people whose year of residence is between 16-20 years. (see Table 5).

### STAKEHOLDERS VIEWS ON THE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IMPLEMENTATION

Stakeholder interviews identified three problems in the community participation processes in Karaikudi.

1. Government control in the decision making process.
2. The implementation weaknesses
3. Residents' negative attitude towards the government program

Despite of the problem, the majority of respondents supported a greater involvement for future public participation processes. Survey results show that most of the respondents want to have more information (84%) and take part in the consultation process (83%). Although the current practice in Karaikudi does not include the participants in the decision-making process, the respondents want to be involved in the decision-making process (76%). They want to share the responsibility in making the decision (78%) and more than half of the respondents (54%) want to have complete control in the decision-making process. However, the stakeholders reacted differently to the survey respondents, regarding the suggestion of greater public involvement. Most of them suggested that several aspects should be considered before the residents could be involved at higher levels of participation.

### CONCLUSION

This study explains the relationship between level of loyalty and rural residents' attitude toward tourism development. Exploratory factor analysis was employed to ensure the dimensions of attitude towards tourism development. Item reduction was done and three dimensions benefits, impacts, and gender equity were extracted. The younger generation people were inclined to perceive more benefits of tourism than the older people. They have favorable attitude towards tourism development in their rural village due to the improving economic contribution. The people with 6-10 years of residence differed significantly in perceived benefits with the people whose year of residence is between 16-20 years. The people who are residing there for more than 20 years tended to have a stronger view of the negative impacts caused as a result of tourism development. The residents' views on the stages of future involvement processes, several suggestions, such as increasing the education level of residents and government officials, were important for further consideration. The public seems to understand their right and need for greater participation in the decision-making process. Community leaders, however, disagreed and explained that the implementation weaknesses and the limitations in the involvement process were the reasons for the weak response from the residents, and affected their ability to participate effectively. However, this study found that the residents were not excluded in any of the public participation process, in fact, they were encouraged to participate, but some limitations in the practice had unintentionally excluded them from the process.

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**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 200)**

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	95	47.5
	Female	105	52.5
Age Group	15-24 years	58	29.0
	25-44 years	80	40.0
	44-65 years	50	25.0
	>65 years	12	6.0
Education	Elementary	68	34.0
	Secondary	55	27.5
	Higher qualification	71	35.5
	uneducated	6	3.0
Occupation	Self-employed	81	40.5
	Employed in Government	12	6.0
	Self Help group	11	5.5
	Employed in Private sector	24	12.0
	Retired	20	10.0
	House wife	11	5.5
	Student	35	17.5
	Unemployed	6	3.0
Monthly Income	<Rs 5000	59	29.5
	Rs 5001-10000	59	29.5
	Rs 10001-15000	41	20.5
	Rs15001-25000	13	6.5
	>Rs25001	28	14.0
Marital Status	Single	71	35.5
	Married	112	56.0
	Separated/Divorced	5	2.5
	Divorced	12	6.0
Family size	1-3	75	37.5
	4-6	119	59.5
	7-9	4	2.0
	10 & above	2	1.0
Length of residency	0-5 years	43	21.5
	6-10 years	41	20.5
	11-15 years	37	18.5
	16-20 years	26	13.0
	>20 years	53	26.5
Nature of Business	Tourism Related	32	16.0
	Non-Tourism Related	168	84.0

**Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Attitude Attributes (N = 200)**

		Mean	SD
1.	Tourism increases job opportunities for the local people	2.91	1.471
2.	Increase in income generation for local people ,artisans and small businesses	2.34	0.956
3.	Wider promotion of handicraft items made in the village	3.58	1.241
4.	Development of common platform for crafts persons to display and sell their local arts and crafts	3.32	1.081
5.	Local labor, technology and resources being optimally utilized	2.66	1.183
6.	Tourism has created high investment, development,and infrastructure	2.73	1.221
7.	Tourism creates more jobs for outsiders than for local people.	2.46	1.251
8.	Host community getting trained on different types of hospitality management, cuisine preparation, tourist handling	2.34	1.121
9.	Collaboration with different business institutions for market tie-ups.	2.41	1.248
10.	Products are sold in the national and international markets	2.43	1.21
11.	Tourism causes changes to the traditional culture of the community	2.12	1.122
12.	Tourism has encouraged a variety of cultural exchange between tourists and residents	3.39	1.014
13.	Mobilization of women artisans in the active participation in the tourism programme	3.42	1.093
14.	Formation of activity based groups and self help groups, benefiting women community	3.52	1.15
15.	Effective skill building of the women community	3.34	1.257
16.	Development of institution like Gurukul platform to learners and teachers	2.05	1.167
17.	Documentation of the crafts, arts and folk lore	2.52	1.15
18.	Tourism benefits outweigh negative impacts	2.27	1.072
19.	Tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities by the local population (e.g., crafts, arts, music)	2.72	1.138
20.	Tourism increases the availability of entertainment (e.g., festivals, exhibitions, and events)	2.62	1.162
21.	Tourism provides an incentive for the conservation of historical buildings	2.84	1.126
22.	Tourism has resulted in more crime rates	2.18	1.123
23.	Improvement in natural beauty of the village	2.75	0.947
24.	Improvement in hygiene conditions	2.66	1.037
25.	Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities destroys the natural environment	2.82	1.158
26.	Tourism improves public utilities (e.g. roads,telecommunication) in the community.	2.03	1.193
27.	Tourism brings political benefits to society (eg.democratic values, tolerance)	2.35	1.104
28.	The community should have authority to suggest control and restrictions of tourism development in the country.	2.14	1.101

**Table: 3: Factor Analysis of Rural Residents Attitude**

S.No	Variables	Loading	Variance Explained (%)	Reliability alpha
	<b>IMPACTS</b>		30.44	0.86
1.	Increase in income generation for local people, artisans and small businesses	0.861		
2.	Tourism has created high investment, development and infrastructure	0.755		
3.	Tourism causes changes to the traditional culture of the community	0.735		
4.	Tourism has encouraged a variety of cultural exchange between tourists and residents	0.734		
5.	Tourism encourages a variety of cultural activities by the local population (e.g., crafts, arts, music)	0.676		
6.	Improvement in natural beauty of the village	0.671		
7.	Construction of hotels and other tourist facilities destroys the natural environment	0.681		
8.	Improvement in hygiene conditions	0.661		
9.	Host community getting trained on different types of hospitality management, cuisine preparation, tourist handling	0.653		
10.	Tourism provides an incentive for the conservation of historical buildings	0.637		
11.	Development of common platform for crafts persons to display and sell their local arts and crafts	0.61		
12.	Wider promotion of handicraft items made in the village	0.586		
13.	Tourism increases job opportunities for the local people.	0.58		
14.	Tourism has resulted in more crime rates	0.553		
15.	Tourism increases the availability of entertainment (e.g., festivals, exhibitions, and events)	0.547		
16.	Tourism improves public utilities (e.g. roads, telecommunication) in the community.	0.51		

<b>BENEFITS</b>			18.66	0.83
1.	Products are sold in the national and international markets	0.642		
2.	Tourism benefits outweigh negative impacts	0.634		
3.	Development of institution like Gurukul platform to learners and teachers	0.618		
4.	Collaboration with different business institutions for market tie-ups.	0.586		
5.	Tourism brings political benefits to society (eg. democratic values, tolerance)	0.559		
6.	Documentation of the crafts, arts and folk lore	0.516		
<b>GENDER EQUITY</b>			11.22	0.82
7.	Effective skill building of the women community	0.784		
8.	Mobilization of women artisans in the active participation in the tourism programme	0.733		
9.	The community has authority to suggest control and restrictions of tourism development in the country.	0.694		
10.	Formation of activity based groups and self help groups, benefiting women community	0.686		
			60.32	

Note: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy: KMO = .881. Bartlett's test of sphericity:  $p = .000$  ( $\chi^2 = 1987$ ,  $df = 210$ ).

**Table: 4 MANOVA/ANOVA of Age**

Variables	Mean				ANOVA	
	15-24 years	25-44 years	44-65 years	>65 years	F-Value	p value
Benefits	2.8532	2.9351 <sup>a</sup>	2.0675	2.1872 <sup>a</sup>	2.867	0.017
Impacts	2.9801	2.8765	2.1756	2.1567	1.234	0.863
Gender Equity	2.9876	2.9897	2.2397	2.3876	2.638	0.056

Note: Wilks's lambda = .889, F value = 2.2982, and  $p = .006$ .

a. Significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) was found in the Duncan test.

**Table: 5 MANOVA/ANOVA of Years of residence**

Variables	Mean					ANOVA	
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	>20 years	F-Value	p value
Benefits	3.7682	3.9544 <sup>a</sup>	3.1276	3.0257 <sup>a</sup>	2.5786	3.796	0.073
Impacts	3.9454 <sup>b</sup>	3.8735	2.8954	2.8731	2.7492 <sup>b</sup>	11.893	0.000
Gender Equity	3.7503	3.5872	3.0572	3.0224	3.5879	0.005	0.854

Note: Wilks's lambda = .893, F value = 4.879, and  $p = .003$ .

a. Significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) was found in the Duncan test.

b. Significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) was found in the Duncan test.



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