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Community-Based Tourism (CBT): A Community Development Tool

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Abstract

Community-based tourism (CBT) has often been viewed as a community development tool for alleviating poverty and improving community lifestyle standards. The mention of community-based tourism was seen in the 1970s and started to get attention in the 1990s. In community-based tourism, the locals have full authority and ownership of tourism businesses, ensuring that tourism's financial benefit stays in the local economy. Community-based tourism is associated with other forms, such as pro-poor, sustainable, alternative, and rural tourism. This paper presents an overview of community-based tourism with the help of a rigorous search of secondary information. The findings of this study include the concept of CBT, factors facilitating CBT, challenges of CBT development, and the role of CBT in the development of the local community. This paper expounds that the development of community-based tourism has a massive contribution to local employment creation, increase in local income, improved knowledge and skill of locals, and increase the local standard of living.

Keywords: Community based tourism, CBT, Factors facilitating CBT, Challenges of CBT, Community participation, Empowerment

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1. Introduction

Community-based tourism can be traced back to the 1970s when CBT was primarily viewed as an alternative approach to mass tourism (Telfer, 2009; Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2012). To understand the conceptual framework of CBT, Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, (2012) proposed perceiving CBT from three different perspectives: Community tourism, community-based partnership tourism (Scheyvens, 2002), and community-based tourism.

Community tourism requires the tour operator's engagement with the community; Scheyvens, (2002) recites community-based partnership tourism as a joint venture business where the local gets employment, profit, and other benefits in exchange for the community resources. Community-based tourism is defined by Denman, (2001) (as cited in Tamir, 2015) as a development process where the community actively participates in the management and development of tourism, and the maximum portion of the benefit from that development remains in the community.

Stone and Stone, (2011) explained CBT as a sustainable concept as CBT promotes active community participation, which can assure continuous local development. Dodds et al., (2018) narrate the primary goal of CBT as sustainable community development where the tourism resource is managed with an active involvement of locals. In many studies, CBT has been alluded to as a part of sustainable tourism, which has similarities with other forms of tourism such as alternative tourism, rural tourism, pro-poor tourism, ecotourism, and responsible tourism (Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2017).

In this study, the authors enlighten different forms of CBT along with its history and evolution, the role of CBT in local development, and the challenges associated with it. Ashley et al., (2000) interpret the contribution of CBT in developing local living standards. CBT increases local living standards by contributing to job creation for locals, enhancing local empowerment, using local resources sustainably, and securing solid economic linkage in the local community (López-Guzmán et al., 2011; Sharply, 2008; Lapeyre, 2010; Gantait et al., 2022). With a view of the fascinating role of CBT in local development, a question might arise: is CBT the solution? The answer to this question might seem tricky, which also has been tried to enlighten by the authors later in this study.

2. Literature Review

The concept of community-based tourism attached to sustainable tourism concentrates on local empowerment, self-employment, and overall community development (Telfer, 2009). Chok et al., (2007) and Scheyvens, (2007) recite that no universal definition of CBT has been found in the literature (as cited in Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2019). However, Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, (2019) mentioned environmental sustainability, social sustainability, cultural sustainability, economic sustainability, local control of tourism, and local benefit as a paradigm for CBT

development. UNEP and UNWTO, (2005) declare sustainable tourism as not any particular type of tourism; instead, sustainable tourism incorporates all forms of tourism in its definition by adding every sustainability matter to the definition of tourism.

Ashley and Garland, (1994) proclaim CBT development as a tool to develop the community and the whole nation by increasing the national income, generating employment, alleviating poverty, reducing the disparity between the wealthy and poor, and conserving the natural environment. Dodds et al., (2018) cited a statement in their conclusion that CBT implementation has effectively alleviated poverty in many developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. After reviewing the literature Dodds et al., (2018) sum up six factors they identify as the success factors for CBT development. In most literature, the common facilitating factors for CBT are local involvement in management and decision-making, local empowerment, private partnership, and locals' skills. The assurance of these facilitating factors may guide CBT development initiation towards success; however, Goodwin and Santilli, (2009), Ashley and Mitchell, (2009), and Moscardo, (2008), express that the success rate of CBT development is not that fascinating in reality.

Ashley and Mitchell, (2009) blame inadequate distribution channels, poor markets, and deficiency in private-sector partnerships for the failure of the CBT initiative. Lack of tourism knowledge and skills of local people, inadequate external funding, absence of local participation, and scarcity of resources and other tourist facilities have been found to be the typical reasons for CBT failure (Tosun, 2000; Stone and Stone, 2011; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008; Goodwin, 2006). Tamir, (2015) provides some suggestions to overcome the challenges associated with CBT development, including ensuring adequate training for local people, enhancing local involvement and participation, improving the tourism products and services in the local area, assuring necessary government support, and enabling diversity in the local economy.

3. Research objective

- To understand the concept of CBT;
- to identify the factors facilitating CBT;
- to elucidate the challenges of CBT development, and;
- to enlighten the role of CBT in the development of the local community.

4. Research question

- What are the factors that facilitate CBT?
- What are the challenges of CBT development?
- Is CBT really the solution?

5. Research gap

Since the concept of CBT emerged and started to be practiced, thousands of researches have been conducted by scholars on this topic. No universal concept and formula for developing CBT has been found in the literature (cited in Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2019); however, the authors tried to define the concept of CBT based on the common factors that have been widely said about CBT and the same goes for identifying the factors that facilitate CBT. Despite CBT's rising popularity, academics, professionals, and community members may need clarification about the approach. Although some research has identified CBT success factors, it is possible that these characteristics need to be fully understood. This gap may be closed by identifying the crucial elements that support CBT in various contexts and exploring how they may be used for community development. This topic is on the verge of exploration by some researchers; more evidence is required to show how CBT impacts community development outcomes. However, most research has found CBT to contribute to the community, but more is needed to prove that CBT is the solution for community development. CBT development still needs to work on many undeniable factors that need proper guidelines to furnish its image.

6. Methodology

The concept of community-based tourism was first introduced in the 1970s and gained popularity in the late 1990s as an alternative to mass tourism, as a poverty alleviation tool, and as a community development tool (Harrison and Schipani, 2007; Telfer, 2009; Scheyvens, 2007; Giampiccoli and Mtapuri, 2012). Numerous researches have been conducted since then on this topic. The main motive of this study is to analyze the secondary data to identify the concept, evolution, different forms, facilitating factors, challenges, and possibilities of CBT. The data was collected from journal articles, published thesis papers, case studies, books, and blogs to conduct the secondary study.

Table 1: Case Studies Reviewed in the Paper

No.	Author(s)	Study Location	Focus of the Study	Outcome
1	(Ghaderi and Henderson, 2012)	Iran	Reactions of the villagers and their perceptions of tourism impacts	Residents appreciated the Sustainable rural tourism concept but sought more public and private sector contributions.
2	(Lapeyre, 2010)	Namibia	Contribution of CBT enterprises to poverty alleviation and community empowerment	Tourism income improved the quality of life and enhanced linkages in the local economy.
3	(López-Guzmán et al., 2011)	Cape Verde	The opinion and perception of tourists visiting the island of Fogo	Tourists appreciate the quality of the services; they have a positive attitude toward the potential of tourism resources.
4	(López-Guzmán et al., 2011)	El Salvador	Residents' approach towards community-based tourism	People from the host community viewed CBT as a tool to create jobs and generate wealth.
5	(Mbaiwa, 2003)	Botswana	Socio-economic and environmental impacts of tourism development	Positive impacts: employment opportunities, source of foreign exchange earnings. Negative impacts: ecology destruction, noise pollution, and poor waste management
6	(Mustapha and Azman, 2013)	Malaysia	Barriers to community participation in tourism development	Cultural, operational, and structural barriers limit community participation in tourism development.
7	(Nor and Kayat, 2010)	Malaysia	Challenges of the community-based homestay program	Challenges with policy, system, and community members' characteristics
8	(Sebele, 2010)	Botswana	Benefits and challenges of a community-based tourism venture	Benefits: job creation, increased income, improved local livelihood etcetera. Challenges: increased living costs, limited benefits, lack of financial assistance, lack of specific skills, etcetera.
9	(Shikida et al., 2010)	Japan	Analyze the relationship between community and extra-community stakeholders through a model.	Two valuable tools have been found, such as the circulation and balancing mechanisms
10	(Stone and Stone 2011)	Botswana	Participation of the community in CBT enterprises	Despite its popularity, CBT still faces challenges and constraints.
11	(Tamir, 2015)	Ethiopia	Identifying opportunities and critical challenges of CBT	Opportunities: strategic location, positive attitudes, the hospitality of locals, the potential of local tourism resources, etcetera. Challenges: limited knowledge, ownership conflicts, capacity problem, inadequate policy implications, low-quality products and services, etcetera.
12	(Trejos and Chiang, 2009)	Costa Rica	Development of economic linkages through CBT	CBT promotes economic linkages
13	(Trejos et al., 2008)	Costa Rica	Contribution of Support Networks in CBT	Support networks directly tackle challenges like development costs and necessary skills.

7. Research findings

7.1 The Concept of Community-Based Tourism

Community-based tourism encompasses the effective participation and collaboration of the local community under the shade of sustainability. It incorporates the engagement of the local people living within a particular area in almost every aspect of tourism and hospitality activities to increase their society's social, economic, and environmental benefits (Dangi and Jamal, 2016; Trejos et al., 2008; Telfer and Wall, 2000). The concept of community-based tourism indicates the necessity of the social dimension, which ensures the involvement of the local community in tourism-related activities for their benefit (Blackstock, 2005).

In the 1970s, some criticisms regarding mass tourism were brought into account, considering the negative impacts of mass tourism and its activities. Based on those, the community-based tourism development process became preferable, enabling the local communities' empowerment through skills, knowledge, and potential community resources (Dangi and Jamal, 2016). CBT indicates the form of tourism that enables the substantial authority of the local community to be involved in tourism-related activities, management systems, and the development process to endure the benefits of tourism within their society. Stone and Stone, (2011) recite that CBT works under the umbrella of sustainability; it considers environmental, social, and cultural conservation and preservation. It helps the local community to work directly with the tourism industry. It includes creating awareness among tourists and educating them regarding their way of living, culture, lifestyle, and authenticity (Blackstock, 2005; Gantait et al., 2022).

Community-based tourism works for the development of the indigenous people living within a specific geographical location in various ways. It includes the type of tourism, which refers to the travel of specific geographical areas to explore the indigenous communities and their authentic lifestyle, including their customs, food, culture, traditions, lifestyle, and beliefs. It also assists in ensuring the involvement of the particular community with tourism-related activities to increase the benefits of tourism to the community. CBT indicates the overall usability of the potential and available resources of the local community to strengthen their self-governance, social condition, and traditional way of living (López-Guzmán et al., 2011; Zielinski, et al., 2021).

7.2 Relationship of CBT with other forms of tourism

Community-based tourism focuses on local-level involvement and makes them responsible for their community's overall tourism development and management (Lucchetti and Font, 2013). By ensuring the local people's participation, CBT helps produce expected benefits for the local community and creates linkages among different forms of tourism development, such as sustainable tourism, pro-poor tourism, alternative tourism, and rural tourism.

Dangi and Jamal, (2016) narrate that community-based tourism initially considers community engagement and development for the planning and development of the whole tourism industry. It also includes some sustainability factors. CBT can be explained as a type of sustainable tourism that promotes and flourishes small-scale community development and improves interactions between tourists and local communities (Shikida et al., 2010). It also enhances the pro-poor strategies at the micro level of the community or in the community setting with the vision of involving local people to get the highest benefits through tourism-related activities (Ashley and Roe, 2001). Sustainable tourism is concerned with the long-term goals and the macro-level tourism development, which includes environmental, social, and economic sustainability and development by providing the benefits of tourism to the current generation and protecting everything for future generations.

Suppose CBT works in combination with sustainable tourism; it can assure economic, social, and environmental benefits for the local people by creating opportunities for protecting the local resources and utilizing them in the best possible way (Sharply, 2008). In that case, it helps to create new employment opportunities, local ownership businesses, and small and medium enterprises, providing financial services and funds to the SMEs, arranging internal and external sources of resources, creating integrated planning, and ensuring the equal distribution of the benefits towards the whole community.

CBT works closely with alternative tourism and responsible tourism as well. The approach includes the considerations that CBT has to ensure economic viability with proper accountability and management systems to enable the local community to make the appropriate decision regarding their welfare through tourism-related activities (Giampiccoli and Saayman, 2017). With the assistance of alternative and responsible tourism, CBT can work for the improvement of their current conditions by utilizing the local resources and assisting poverty alleviation from their society. Suppose CBT can work with these different forms of tourism. In that case, it can be used as the yardstick of the community setting and the overall development of the community people very quickly.

7.3 Role of CBT in the development of local community

As a wing of sustainable tourism, the role of community-based tourism can be observed from economic, environmental, and socio-cultural perspectives (Tamir, 2015). Most of the literature concentrated on socio-

cultural aspects, as CBT is closely related to the local community (Weaver and Lawton, 2007). López-Guzmán et al., (2011) end the study by referring to CBT as a tool to generate wealth for the local community and create employment for them, generating a handsome economic benefit for the local community. Ashley et al., (2000) and Sebele, (2010) enlighten the facts (as cited in Tamir, 2015) that CBT development has a massive contribution to local employment creation, which ends up increasing the local's standard of living. Sebele, (2010) also interpreted several contributions of CBT developments, such as the financial benefit of the local community, ensuring environmental conservation, aid in local product and service production, and enhancing the overall development of the local community.

Sharply, (2008) illustrates the primary goal of CBT to ensure local involvement in tourism development, empowerment, job creation, and development of locals' living standards. Economic leakage is considered one of the most considerable barriers to tourism development, which can be minimized if locals get highly involved in tourism development (Lapeyre, 2010). If the local community initiates the tourism enterprise, sell the products produced by locals, and ensure local tourist facility, then the tourist's expenditure will remain in the economy, and economic linkage will be ensured (Trejos et al., 2008; Telfer and Wall, 2000; Mbaiwa, 2003; Trejos and Chiang, 2009).

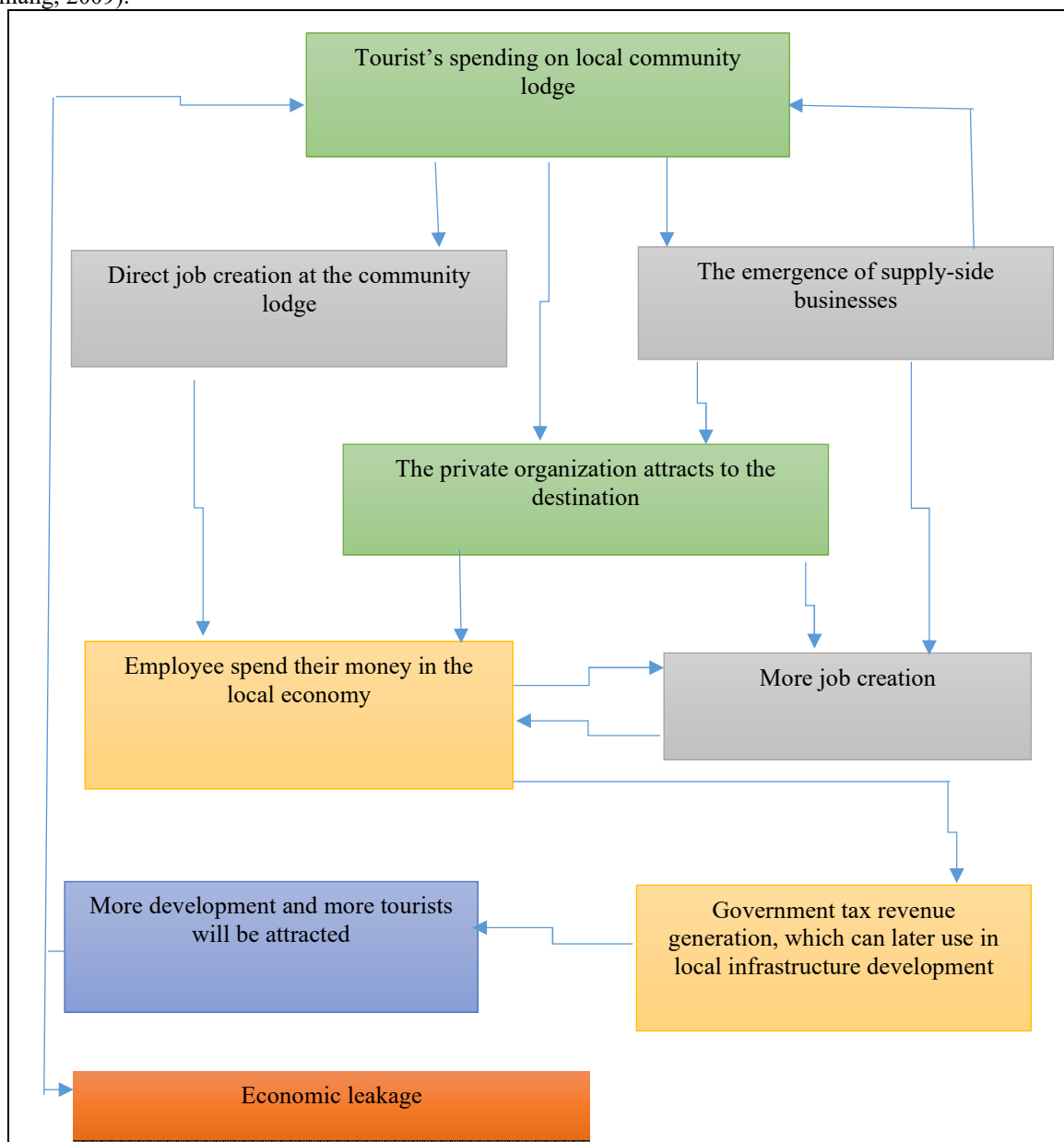


Figure 1: Multiplier effect in CBT development

Source: Reconstructed by authors.

Giampiccoli and Saayman, (2018) and Asker et al., (2010) glorify CBT development as a tool that assures a higher multiplier effect on the local economy. The model mentioned above was reconstructed by authors

(authors get inspiration from geographyfieldwork.com/TouristMultiplier) to show the contribution of CBT development to the multiplier effect in the local economy. Fig 1 shows that tourist spending on local community lodges creates direct local jobs, attracts many emerging supply-side businesses and draws many private enterprises' attention. Supply-side businesses and private organizations create more jobs in the local area, and the employees again spend their salary in the local economy. The circulation of tourist expenditure in the local economy creates a high multiplier effect, which contributes to building a robust local economy (Wanhill, 1994).

7.4 What are the factors that facilitate CBT?

Zielinski et al., (2021) enlighten some economic, social, cultural, and political factors that may contribute to CBT development initiatives' success and failure. No prescribed guideline or framework for CBT development is available, which may contribute to the failure of CBT application. Goodwin and Santilli, (2009) analyzed 15 case studies and found six economically successful CBT projects. One of the common factors seen in those successful CBT implementations is that they all maintained a strong network with the local tour operator. The authors have illuminated some factors that may facilitate CBT application, including economic benefits to the local community, conservation initiatives, partnership business within the community, partnership business with other private sector organizations with the viewpoint of the more significant benefit to the locals, strong network and collective benefits to the local community.

Through a rigorous search of literature, Zielinski et al., (2020) establish a list of the most common factors that may contribute to the success and failure of CBT development. Knowledge and skill of the local community, partnership with private sector enterprises, community involvement and participation, economic viability, local participation in decision-making, technical cooperation, political support, quality of tourism products, and effective leadership have been found to be the most influential factors in CBT application.

7.5 What are the challenges of CBT development?

Community-based tourism development has always been enumerated as a tool for developing a community by ensuring community participation in tourism development and getting the most out of CBT development for the community. Nevertheless, the result only sometimes goes as per the actual plan; hence, implementing CBT has been seen as challenging. Nor and Kayat, (2010) explore several challenges of CBT development in Malaysia, including the absence of independence among the community, lack of formal organizational structure, commercialization, and the potential conflict in the community. One of the significant challenges of CBT development is local people's lack of educational background (Mustapha and Azman, 2013; Setokoe et al., 2019; Tosun, 2000; Scheyvens and Momsen, 2008; Stone and Stone, 2011). The poor educational level of locals sometimes leads them towards poor knowledge and skills about tourism development. Poor knowledge and skill impede the locals' confidence level, resulting in a lack of participation in tourism development initiatives (Setokoe and Ramukumba, 2020). If the locals do not participate in the CBT development as expected, then acquiring the awaited outcome from CBT development becomes challenging.

Setokoe and Ramukumba, (2020) also describe some other challenges of CBT, such as leadership conflict among locals and outside organizations, absence of adequate support from the government, lack of appropriate infrastructure, and deficiency in funding. Scheyvens and Momsen, (2008) argued that the CBT challenges include poor knowledge and skill, inadequate opportunities for development, limited tourism infrastructure, and limited market. Mitchell and Muckosy (2008) reviewed 200 CBT projects across America and found that the projects become unsuccessful when "external funding dries up" in those CBT projects. Moreover, lack of market access and proper governance has been found to be another main reason for those projects to fail. Goodwin, (2006) narrates some reasons for the failure of many CBT projects worldwide. The reasons include a lack of business/commercial understanding of local people, poor connection with the travel agents or tour operators, insufficient local assets to meet the tourist's needs, extreme control from private organizations, and overdependence on external funds.

A study conducted by Stone and Stone, (2011) expounds that among the surveyed respondents, 95% of the local adults and 50% of the young generations had a vague sense of ownership, there was insufficient creation of employment, and locals were immensely depended on external funds (Goodwin, 2006). Furthermore, locals had little information about the recent trends and tourism markets and little community participation and involvement in the development. The challenges mentioned earlier must be reduced to successfully implement CBT, which may be possible through careful observation of the local community.

7.6 Is CBT really the solution?

The question of whether CBT is really a solution for community development or not depends on many factors, and this is a controversial topic to discuss. Because of the many examples of unsuccessful implementation of CBT, many researchers have expressed their opinion towards CBT as a "slogan-only concept" and an "unrealistic and naïve concept" (Blackstock, 2005; Ghaderi and Henderson, 2012). Contrariwise, many

researchers have shown evidence through their research that the successful implementation of CBT contributes to local employment, local economic benefit, maximizing economic linkage and minimizing economic leakage (Marsh, 2022; Shikida et al., 2010; Mehmetoglu, 2001; Lapeyre, 2010; López-Guzmán et al., 2011).

As tourism is a service industry, it requires enormous contributions from women to run the business successfully. Marsh, (2022) discusses that CBT contributes to encouraging female empowerment, and besides that, it also enhances wildlife conservation, increases the standard of local livelihood, etc. Lapeyre, (2010) argued CBT from both positive and negative perspective, and the study shows that CBT contributes to the income generation of locals, improves their livelihood, secures economic linkage, and empower local actors. The study also questioned the sustainability of the CBT projects because of the high cost, weak managerial ability of locals, and lack of support from non-government and other donors.

Gantait et al., (2022) conclude the study with the viewpoint of CBT development as a sustainable tool for building a long-term image of the destination, empowering the locals, promoting the local cultures and lifestyle, and enhancing the local living standard. López-Guzmán et al., (2011) narrate in their study that the locals of El Salvador are very positive towards the CBT development; hence, it reduces the local unemployment problem with a generous amount of economic contribution to the locals.

A successful CBT implementation can be secured with the proper training of the community and by ensuring their active involvement in the CBT development. The study conducted on the island of Fogo in Cape Verde represents the high tourist satisfaction with the service the locals provide, and the tourists are eager to visit again to enjoy the local service (López-Guzmán et al., 2011). So, it can be claimed that by ensuring local involvement and spontaneous participation, assuring necessary training to locals, enhancing the tourist facilities, and providing adequate funds, a practical application of CBT development is possible, which will secure a strong linkage in the local economy.

8. Contribution of the paper

This paper aims to improve knowledge and gain a comprehensive understanding of community-based tourism as a tool for community development. The paper thoroughly reviews the literature published on community-based tourism, including case studies worldwide. Then, it synthesizes the results to highlight major themes and problems. The study emphasizes how community-based tourism can support destination areas' cultural, social, and economic growth. It also examines localities' difficulties and obstacles when implementing community-based tourism initiatives and offers solutions. Overall, the report significantly advances community-based tourism by analyzing the existing research in-depth, highlighting important themes and problems, and offering solutions. Scholars, practitioners, and politicians interested in community-based tourism and its potential as a tool for community development will find the study helpful.

9. Conclusion

If this tool is used correctly, community-based tourism can be a solution for community development. However, we may see CBT as harmful or improper, leading to the opposite result. The CBT implementation may not work because of a lack of community involvement and participation, insufficient knowledge and skills, lack of supervision, and higher economic leakage. The method of CBT was proposed in the first place to reduce economic leakage from tourism development, and later, it became the tool for poverty alleviation for developing countries. The feasibility of CBT development depends on many factors, and if those factors are correctly followed, this tool can be a game changer for a community. The factors contributing to successful CBT development include active community involvement, proper knowledge, and skills of locals about tourism trends and development, community participation in decision-making, local employment creation, economic linkage, proper infrastructure, and proper technical support. Suppose all of those factors are assured in CBT development. In that case, CBT development can be a beneficial solution for community development and rural tourism development, and it can also play a vital role in poverty alleviation.

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