

Community Based Eco-Tourism Potentials & Developments in Karankadu, Ramanathapuram District of Tamil Nadu – A Study

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ABSTRACT

Community based eco-tourism is one of the important areas for social and economic development of rural communities. It helps the preservation of local culture and assists for development of local area, heritage, tradition and cultural exchange among local people and tourists. This form of tourism also creates ample of employment opportunities to host community people and it would bring drastic changes among the local people's living standards.

Karankadu is an upcoming eco-tourist destination in Tamil Nadu. This potential Mangrove forest has been attracting large number of tourists and nature lovers around the year. The local fishermen community people have been safeguarding this eco tourist site from various ecological threats. Today tourism has become a source of revenue to majority host community people. This research paper emphasizes the potentials of Karankadu and highlights the contemporary sustainable developments in an analytical manner. It concludes with appropriate recommendations.

KEY WORDS: Community, Eco-tourism, Living Standards, Karankadu, Mangrove forest.

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Community based eco-tourism is a kind of tourism activity that is possessed, functioned and managed in the community level and it is highly contributing to overall development of local community (Manyara and Jones, 2007) by sustainable management practices and conserving social and cultural values, natural resources and preserving tradition and heritage values (Asefa, 2020). Community based eco-tourism is one of the important area for social and economic development of rural communities and particular village that have various environmental resources which are sustainably used for improvement of rural communities (Das and Chatterjee, 2015). Thus, community based eco-tourism reveals that local community has considerable control on natural resources and they are intensively involved in eco-tourism related activities and benefits are shared by members in the community (Claiborne, 2010).

Community based eco-tourism is one format of local tourism that is favourable for local communities and inferring and communicating culture, tradition and environment to tourists by them (Salazar, 2012) which is largely supported by Local Bodies, Local Authorities and NGO's. It is the activities of local community in a particular village and the local people are fulfilling the needs of tourists (Nuzhar, 2016) and local community is involved and maintained those tourist places through sustainable practices (Pongsakornrungrungsilp, 2014). Community based eco-tourism is taking in to account of cultural, environmental and social aspects of community and village and it is tourist based interaction and active participation of local community for generation of income and preservation of various benefits for environment and local community (Saha et al 2015). Community based eco-tourism in Karankadu village is popular among domestic and international tourists and they are visiting to this village in large number for enjoying its exclusiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to study community based eco-tourism potentials & developments in Karankadu of Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine the impacts of community based eco-tourism on households.
2. To analyze the influence of community participation on sustainable development of

community based eco-tourism.

3. To evaluate the relation amid impacts of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Nature-based tourism increasingly called Eco-tourism worldwide, is fast gaining the attention of developed and developing countries as a potential means to conserve natural resources and support sustainable economic progress according to the Report of *Science & Technology issues in Coastal Ecotourism*, 1992. Eco-tourism is becoming popular and developing in developing nations. A study of *Margot O' Neill* (1991) revealed that in developing nations, nature travel accounts for more than 20% of the total tourism. *Saiful et al* (2011) found that community based eco-tourism had improved participation of local communities in eco-tourism activities and it had increased income generation and standard of living of local community.

Isaac and *Wuleka* (2012) concluded that local community were highly engaged in eco-tourism related income generating activities and they got toilet facilities, school, micro credit, library and trading activities due to community based eco-tourism. *Islam et al* (2013) revealed that community based eco-tourism had conserved natural and environmental resources and it had promoted local eco-tourism related enterprises and improved income generation of local community. *Eshetu* (2014) indicated that community based eco-tourism had improved livelihood of local community and it had conserved natural resources and it had positive impacts on social and political empowerment of local community. *Kampetch and Jitpakdee* (2019) indicated that community based eco-tourism was improving eco-tourism based economic activities and it had developed nature, environment and cultural aspects of local community and it also improved participation of the community in the development of eco-tourism.

III. METHODOLOGY:

This research paper was mainly developed on the basis of both Primary and Secondary data sources. The primary data was collected by using the structural questionnaire from 250 households. To differentiate amid impacts of community based eco-tourism on households and their profile, ANOVA test and t-test were used to analyze the influence of community participation on sustainable development of community based eco-tourism. The correlation analysis is applied to study the relation amid impacts of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households. Further the data was analyzed with Chi-Square test.

HYPOTHESIS:

The study endeavored to test the following hypothesis evolved in the light of the said objective.

H01: There is no input of Community based Eco-Tourism on Households.

H02: There is no influence of Community participation on Sustainable development on Community based Eco-tourism.

H03: There is no relation between the actual impact of Community based Eco-tourism & Employment of Households.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

This study is significant because it highlights the Karankadu mangrove forest which is a hidden and potential upcoming Community based Eco-tourist destination. The level of Community participation and highlighted impacts of ecotourism can be used as guidelines for sustainable use of tourism as a mechanism for poverty alleviation. The study provides suitable answers and further into the role of community involvement in tourism development. The stakeholder, development planners, managers would take the advantage of the findings and recommendations of this study. This study also helps the Department of Tourism & Forest authorities in their Policy formulation and right decision makings towards strengthening the Community based sustainable eco-tourism development.

Keeping in view the well developed infrastructural facilities, the tourists and visitors have been visiting to this mesmerizing eco tourist destination in good number. The below images and statistical figures highlight the scenic attraction of landscape and increasing growth rate of tourist and visitor arrivals to this ecotourism potential destination.

Images-1
Karankadu Mangrove Forest Eco-Tourist Destination



இராமநாதபுரம் மாவட்டம், திருவாரூரை வட்டம், காரங்காடு கிராமத்தில் இன்று (11.12.2020) மாஃட் ஆட்சித் தலைவர் திரு.தினகர் பொன்னுடி ஆதினி.இ.ஆ.ப. துணைக் கிராமபாசு செய்து வனத்துறை மீறும் காரங்காடு குழுமம் மேம்பாட்டுக் குழு மூலமாக இணைந்து மேற்கொள்ளும் சமூகம் ஊர்திக் குழுமம் கருவரை மேம்பாட்டு நடவடிக்கைகள் குறித்து ஆய்வு செய்தார். உடன் உதவி வசதி மாதிரிகளால் திரு.மே.கமேளாசிவம், வளர்ச்சித் திரு.க.சதீஷ் ஆதினிமார் உள்ளனர்.

Source: Personal Collection & Local News Paper

Table – 1
Tourist and Visitor Arrivals (2016 – 2020)

Year	Tourists	Visitors	Total
2016	1064	1553	2617
2017	1863	2179	4042
2018	2853	3284	6137
2019	3286	3813	7099
2020	296	395	691

Source: District Forest Office, Ramanathapuram

IV. RESULTS:

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The economic impact of community-based eco-tourism is given in Table-2.

Table – 2
Economic Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Economic Impact	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community based eco-tourism is creating new and additional jobs for local communities	3.96	0.76
Community based eco-tourism is enhancing modern economic activities in local areas	3.34	0.59
Community based eco-tourism is increasing income of local	3.92	0.68

communities		
Community based eco-tourism is improving standard of living of local communities	3.80	0.72
Community based eco-tourism is increasing local infrastructure	3.38	0.64

The households are agreed with community based eco-tourism is creating new and additional jobs for local communities, community based eco-tourism is increasing income of local communities and community based eco-tourism is improving standard of living of local communities, while, they are neutral with community based eco-tourism is enhancing modern economic activities in local areas and community based eco-tourism is increasing local infrastructure.

FEATURES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The relation amid features of households and economic impact of community based eco-tourism is given in Table-3.

Table – 3
Features of Households and Economic Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Features	Number	Economic Impact		t-Value / F-Value	Sig.
		Mean	SD		
Gender					
Male	142	18.58	1.47	4.594** (t-Value)	.000
Female	108	22.26	1.26		
Age					
Below 25 Years	42	22.60	1.61	5.716** (F-Value)	.000
26 – 35 Years	67	20.43	1.77		
36 – 45 Years	88	20.22	1.62		
Above 45 Years	53	18.42	1.28		
Education					
Secondary	111	22.40	1.53	5.430** (F-Value)	.000
Higher Secondary	95	18.54	1.72		
Under Graduation	44	20.32	1.57		
Monthly Income					
Less than Rs.10,000	97	24.36	1.21	5.048** (F-Value)	.000
Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000	90	22.42	1.48		
More than Rs.15,000	63	20.48	1.87		
Marital Status					
Married	210	22.76	1.60	1.413 ^{NS} (t-Value)	0.159
Unmarried	40	22.08	1.51		

** Significant in 1% level ^{NS} Not Significant

The results show that economic impact of community based eco-tourism is higher for households in the female category (Mean = 22.26), in the age group of below 25 years (Mean = 22.60), in holding secondary education (Mean = 22.40), in having monthly income of less than Rs.10,000 (Mean = 24.36) and in married status (Mean = 22.76).

The t-value and F-value are revealing that significant difference exists features of households and economic impact of community based eco-tourism excluding marital status.

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The socio-cultural impact of community based eco-tourism is given in Table-4.

Table-4
Socio-Cultural Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Socio-Cultural Impact	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community based eco-tourism is helping for promoting and preserving local culture	3.89	0.70
Community based eco-tourism is assisting for development of local area	3.85	0.97

Community based eco-tourism is facilitating local people to learn new things from tourists	3.36	0.70
Community based eco-tourism is contributing to revival of heritage and tradition	3.79	0.60
Community based eco-tourism is improving interaction and cultural exchange among local people and tourists	3.75	0.71

The households are agreed with community based eco-tourism is helping for promoting and preserving local culture, community based eco-tourism is assisting for development of local area, community based eco-tourism is contributing to revival of heritage and tradition and community based eco-tourism is improving interaction and cultural exchange among local people and tourists, while, they are neutral with community based eco-tourism is facilitating local people to learn new things from tourists.

FEATURES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The relation amid features of households and socio-cultural impact of community based eco-tourism is given in Table-5.

Table – 5
Features of Households and Socio-Cultural Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Features	Number	Socio-Cultural Impact		t-Value / F-Value	Sig.
		Mean	SD		
Gender					
Male	142	18.46	2.14	4.087** (t-Value)	.000
Female	108	20.76	2.10		
Age					
Below 25 Years	42	18.40	2.14	5.446** (F-Value)	.000
26 – 35 Years	67	18.64	2.21		
36 – 45 Years	88	19.69	2.15		
Above 45 Years	53	21.72	1.94		
Education					
Secondary	111	17.45	2.53	5.718** (F-Value)	.000
Higher Secondary	95	19.86	1.78		
Under Graduation	44	21.52	1.32		
Monthly Income					
Less than Rs.10,000	97	18.42	2.55	5.468** (F-Value)	.000
Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000	90	21.28	1.81		
More than Rs.15,000	63	19.14	1.42		
Marital Status					
Married	210	18.13	2.14	3.872** (t-Value)	.000
Unmarried	40	21.08	2.06		

** Significant in 1% level

The results indicate that socio-cultural impact of community based eco-tourism is higher for households in the female category (Mean = 20.76), in the age group of above 45 years (Mean = 21.72), in holding under graduation (Mean = 21.52), in having monthly income of Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000 (Mean = 21.28) and in unmarried status (Mean = 21.08).

The t-value and F-value are revealing that significant difference exists features of households and socio-cultural impact of community based eco-tourism.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The environmental impact of community based eco-tourism is given in Table-6.

Table – 6
Environmental Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Environmental Impact	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community based eco-tourism is encouraging to use renewable sources of energy	3.30	0.74
Community based eco-tourism is involving in conservation of	3.72	0.65

environmental resources		
Community based eco-tourism is reducing pollution of water and soil	3.65	0.68
Community based eco-tourism is improving waste management practices	3.70	0.66
Community based eco-tourism is helpful for efficient management of natural resources	3.40	0.69

The households are agreed with community based eco-tourism is involving in conservation of environmental resources, community based eco-tourism is reducing pollution of water and soil and community based eco-tourism is improving waste management practices, while, they are neutral with community based eco-tourism is encouraging to use renewable sources of energy and community based eco-tourism is helpful for efficient management of natural resources.

FEATURES OF HOUSEHOLDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The relation amid features of households and environmental impact of community based eco-tourism is given in Table-7.

Table – 7
Features of Households and Environmental Impact of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Features	Number	Environmental Impact		t-Value / F-Value	Sig.
		Mean	SD		
Gender					
Male	142	16.27	2.30	4.134** (t-Value)	.000
Female	108	14.63	2.49		
Age					
Below 25 Years	42	14.14	2.18	5.740** (F-Value)	.000
26 – 35 Years	67	15.28	2.15		
36 – 45 Years	88	15.58	2.63		
Above 45 Years	53	16.79	2.03		
Education					
Secondary	111	14.61	2.15	5.126** (F-Value)	.000
Higher Secondary	95	15.56	2.95		
Under Graduation	44	16.18	1.83		
Monthly Income					
Less than Rs.10,000	97	15.30	2.14	5.240** (F-Value)	.000
Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000	90	16.60	2.05		
More than Rs.15,000	63	14.46	2.81		
Marital Status					
Married	210	16.50	2.42	3.413** (t-Value)	.000
Unmarried	40	14.33	2.65		

** Significant in 1% level

The results reveal that environmental impact of community based eco-tourism is higher for households in the male category (Mean = 16.27), in the age group of above 45 years (Mean = 16.79), in holding under graduation (Mean = 16.18), in having monthly income of Rs.10,001 – Rs.15,000 (Mean = 16.60) and in married status (Mean = 16.50).

The t-value and F-value are revealing that significant difference exists features of households and environmental impact of community based eco-tourism.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The community participation in community based eco-tourism is given in Table-8.

Table – 8
Community Participation in Community Based Eco-Tourism

Community Participation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community is having collective responsibility	3.99	0.78
Community is sharing resources efficiently	3.32	0.59
Community is sharing benefits among members	3.94	0.69
Community is participating in decision making	3.82	0.75
Community is having sense of ownership of initiatives	3.68	0.81

The households are agreed with community is having collective responsibility, community is sharing benefits among members, community is participating in decision making and community is having sense of ownership of initiatives, while, they are neutral with community is sharing resources efficiently.

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM

The binary logit regression is used to analyze the influence of community participation on sustainable development of community based eco-tourism and the result is given in Table-9. The values of -2 Log Likelihood, Nagelkerke R Square, Cox and Snell R Square and Hosmer and Lemeshow Test imply that binary logit regression model has good fit and it is significant.

Table – 9
Influence of Community Participation on Sustainable Development of Community Based Eco-Tourism

Community Participation	Estimated Coefficient	Significant Level	Exp (B)
Constant	1.242**	0.000	0.084
Collective Responsibility	0.892**	0.000	1.968
Sharing Resources	0.685**	0.000	1.626
Sharing Benefits	0.764**	0.000	1.794
Participation in Decision Making	0.816**	0.000	1.872
Sense of Ownership of Initiatives	0.358	0.495	1.107
-2 Log Likelihood	1476.542		
Nagelkerke R Square	0.178		
Cox and Snell R Square	0.125		
Hosmer and Lemeshow Test	0.616		

** Significant in 1% level

Collective responsibility, participation in decision making, sharing benefits and sharing resources are significantly and positively influencing sustainable development of community based eco-tourism. When the households are concerned more on collective responsibility, the likelihood of sustainable development of community based eco-tourism is increasing by 1.968 times in comparison with less collective responsibility. When the households are concerned more on participation in decision making, the likelihood of sustainable development of community based eco-tourism is increasing by 1.872 times in comparison with less participation in decision making. When the households are concerned more on sharing benefits, the likelihood of sustainable development of community based eco-tourism is increasing by 1.794 times in comparison with less sharing benefits. When the households are concerned more on sharing resources, the likelihood of sustainable development of community based eco-tourism is increasing by 1.626 times in comparison with less sharing resources.

RELATION AMID IMPACTS OF COMMUNITY BASED ECO-TOURISM AND EMPOWERMENT OF HOUSEHOLDS

The relation amid impacts of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households is examined by applying correlation analysis and the result is given in Table-10.

Table-10
Impacts of Community Based Eco-Tourism and Empowerment of Households

Particulars	Economic Impact	Socio-Cultural Impact	Environmental Impact	Empowerment
Economic	1.00			

Impact				
Socio-Cultural Impact	0.54**	1.00		
Environmental Impact	0.56**	0.63**	1.00	
Empowerment	0.76**	0.72**	0.66**	1.00

** Significant in 1% level

The correlation coefficient amid economic impact of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households is 0.76 and it shows that they are positively and highly inter related. The correlation coefficient amid socio-cultural impact of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households is 0.72 and it shows that they are positively and highly inter related. The correlation coefficient amid environmental impact of community based eco-tourism and empowerment of households is 0.66 and it shows that they are positively and highly inter related.

V. CONCLUSION:

This study elucidates that Community based eco-tourism is involving in conservation of environmental resources, reducing pollution of water, soil and improving waste management practices. The study shows that the significant difference between exiting features of household results that the collective responsibility, environmental impact of community based eco-tourism and sharing resources. Collective responsibility, participation in decision making, sharing benefits and sharing resources are significantly and positively influencing sustainable development of community based eco-tourism. The economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of community based eco-tourism is highly relating with empowerment of households. Hence, the community based eco-tourism should enhance modern economic activities in local areas and it must increase local infrastructure. Community based eco-tourism should facilitate local people to learn new things from tourists and it must encourage to use renewable sources of energy. Further, community based eco-tourism should help for efficient management of natural resources and community should share resources efficiently for sustainable development of goals of community-based eco-tourism potentials & developments in Karankadu village of Ramanathapuram district.

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