

Abstract

Tourism, in recent years, has emerged as an important economic activity in developed and developing countries alike. Planners are increasingly turning to tourism as a viable economic development strategy, as many countries experience industrial restructuring. Established destinations are getting crowded with increasing volumes of tourists resulting in exposure of residents to different cultures and new economic environment. This unprecedented growth in tourists' population has resulted in challenges before the planners to familiarize people about the accruing benefits of tourism to them without much disturbing the local culture and environment, so that people do not turn hostile to new tourism initiatives and to further ensure that tourism benefits reach them properly. This requires development of the Hospitality Sector with the highest international standard through setting up of world class infrastructure facilities, like, airports, national highways, and hotels etc. keeping in view the interest of residents.

The attitude of residents towards tourism development is a complex and dynamic phenomenon where a variety of factors exert differential influence on local residents. Therefore, measurement of socio-economic factors such as, community participation, quality of life, community awareness, and tourism dependency related to residents' support for tourism development becomes very important and assumes special significance. The present study attempts to assess the influence on these factors on residents' attitude towards support for tourism development. The study has developed a structural model of support for tourism development from the residents' perspective. It is based on the social exchange and stakeholders theories to examine the relationship among constructs. Data were collected from three tourism destinations located in Puri district, on east coast region of the state of Odisha, India.

It is postulated that residents' support for tourism development is, directly or indirectly, influenced by community participation, quality of life, public awareness, economic dependency, economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism development. The findings of the study reveal that residents' support for tourism development is a positive function of economic and socio-cultural impacts, and negative function of environmental impacts. The findings further indicate that satisfactory quality of life influences the residents in perceiving the economic impacts positively. Besides, residents are also found to be knowledgeable and aware about the negative environmental and positive of socio-cultural and economic impacts of tourism. A high level of desire to participate in the decision making is also identified among the residents. The negative perception of tourism development impacts, however, can be taken care of by involving residents in planning and decision-making processes of tourism development.

Keywords: Attitude, social exchange theory, stakeholder theory, tourism impacts, determinants of support, quality of life, community participation, awareness, dependency