

## Importance of Community Involvement in Tourism Development Activities

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**Abstract :** This research paper investigates the importance of community involvement in tourism development activities from the initial stage. Community is defined as a group of people living in the same area and practicing common ownership and practices or with a commonality such as norms, religion, values, customs, or identity. Globalisation has restructured economic, political, and social relationships at the local level, which impacts community involvement in activities taking place in their own space. Although social relationships and interests are no longer limited to local communities, the power of place remains. Whereas, tourism is considered as an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies and their international relations. The existing literature has indicated that the four types of motivation in community involvement are best differentiated by identifying the unique ultimate goal for each motivation. In a nutshell, the ultimate goal for egoism is to increase one's own welfare; altruism is to increase the welfare of another individual or individuals; collectivism is aimed at increasing the welfare of a group, and the principlism is to uphold one or more moral principles. As a base of community involvement, each of these four forms of motivation exhibits its own strengths and weaknesses to be acknowledged. Purposive sampling was suitable to select the fourteen descendant group representatives. The representatives included chief/s, headman, senior descendants' member, and members of the traditional council who descends from MWCHS. The qualitative research design was adopted for the study in the form of semi-structured interviews. Community development is a social process involving residents in activities designed to improve their quality of life. The key finding of the research is the importance of involving communities, in particular, the immediate community members from the initial stage of any proposed tourism development activity. Without a doubt, the immediate communities are well informed about the dynamics of the area (economically, politically, and socially). Therefore, the finding suggests that communities are in a better position to advise project managers on possible potential tourism developments activities that can address the real needs and benefit the community, instead of investing resources in a development that will not benefit or add any value in the lives of the targeted communities. It must be noted that the power of the place where the development will be implemented remains with the community. Furthermore, community support and buy-in are crucial to the success of prospective tourism development. In conclusion, it cannot be denied that community involvement comes with its own challenges, contrary to greater sustainable benefits that can be realized prior to articulation. The study suggests for project managers to ensure a fair and transparent community involvement process. Fair distribution of meaningful roles could secure trust and result in these communities to view the proposed development as their own.

**Keywords :** communities, development, involvement, tourism

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