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Limits to Community Participation in Tourism: A Case Study of Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa

Takalani Ramukumba¹

Abstract: An approach to tourism development that emphasises the need for community participation in tourism planning is advocated as a pathway to sustainable tourism and poverty alleviation. However, it is argued that the community participation concept originated in the developed world and faces different and context-specific limitations when applied in developing countries. This paper examines the structural and operational limits to community involvement in tourism in the Amathole District Municipality, Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The study adopted a quantitative research methodology using self-administered questionnaires as a data collection instrument. The study participants were members of the community working in the tourism industry and local community members who have an interest in tourism. Whilst the study main objective was to understand the barriers to community participation in tourism, it also thought to understand whether there were any differences in responses between those working in the tourism industry and those who do not work in the tourism industry. The results of the study indicated a significant difference in opinions regarding limits to community participation in tourism between those working and those not working in the tourism industry. This paper contributes further to the debate of barriers to community participation in tourism at a local level, which deprives community members of sharing in benefits of the tourism industry and highlights the barriers that needs to be eliminated if such benefits are to be accrued by community members.

Keywords: Operational & structural limits; community participation in tourism; tourism development

JEL Classification: Z32

1. Introduction

According to Jones (2007) community participation entails involving people or interest groups who are outside the formal decision-making processes of government with a view of drawing stakeholders into decision-making processes. The concept of community participation dates back to the early 1970's when Gunn (1988) advocated community participation in tourism development through the use of forums and since then, community participation has been advanced as both a means and an end in different settings and a range of disciplines have contributed to the understanding and growth of the concept. Since then, interest in community approach increased after Murphy (1985) seminal work on "Tourism: A Community Approach" argued that tourism relies upon the involvement of local community members.

In tourism, community participation receives much attention, both as an element of local economic development and conservation. (Ashley & Roe, 1998) Participation of local people in the tourism is one of the ways through which local communities can get involved in tourism development and improve their share of tourism benefits. Most of the literature, however, look at the local community's involvement in the sharing of tourism benefits or the impacts of tourism development while

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overlooking their actual involvement in decision making during the planning process.¹ Meaningful involvement of local communities in the tourism entails empowerment of local residents to enable them to set their own goals, and to identify their hopes and concerns for tourism, in order that tourism benefits to the community are maximised (Murphy, 1988; Timothy, 1999) but there are a number of operational, structural and cultural limitations to such an approach that are specific to developing countries.²

Dogra and Gupta (2012) are of the opinion that tourism concerns as one of the fastest growing industries and growing with great pace. In this regard, tourism can be used as a tool to enhance development in developing countries. Timothy and Loannidas (2002) are of the opinion that in many countries, tourism has been used for enhancing economic conditions. However, these countries faced several challenges in using tourism as a developmental tool from an economic perspective and Tosun (2000) identified operational, structural and cultural limits to community participation in tourism in developing countries. These limitations are as follows: Operational limits are (a) centralization of public administration of tourism, (b) lack of information and (c) lack of coordination. The structural limitations consists of (a) attitude of professionals, (b) elite domination, (c) lack of expertise, (d) lack of trained human resource, (e) lack of relevant legal system, (f) high cost of community participation and finally (g) lack of financial resources and the cultural limitations includes (a) limited capabilities and capacity of local people and (b) lack of awareness within the local communities. Today still, many municipalities in South Africa under the departments of local economic development and tourism are still challenged on ensuring maximum community participation in tourism. This paper therefore focussed on the operational and structural limitations limiting community participation in tourism in Amathole District Municipalities in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The research objectives of the research were:

- To evaluate community views on the barriers to community participation in tourism;
- To determine if there are significant statistical differences in community views of the barriers between those working in the tourism industry and those who do not work in the tourism industry.

2. The Benefits of Community Involvement in Tourism

Many authors have written about the reasons for advancing community participation in tourism and many of them highlighted the importance of achieving sustainable tourism development. (Inskeep, 1994; Joppe, 1996; Ritchie, 1998; Tosun & Jenkins, 1996) These authors argued that community participation approach to tourism development is a prerequisite for sustainability. They based their argument on the premise that the more local community members benefit from tourism, the more likely they are to help with the preservation of natural and cultural heritage and provide support for tourism in their communities. This argument was further enhanced by Timothy (1996) who argued that for protected areas, the benefits that local communities obtain from tourism development act as incentives for conservation of the natural resources on which most protected area-based tourism products depend upon. The same author went further and said that during the planning process of tourism development, input and concerns from local community members is critical as these

¹ See (Mahony & Van Zyl, 2002; Mbaiwa, 2003; 2005; Novelli et al., 2006; Sebele, 2010; Snyman, 2012; Spenceley & Goodwin, 2007; Stone & Stone, 2011).

² See (Marzuki et al., 2012; Saufi et al., 2014; Tosun, 2000).

community members become the custodians of the natural and cultural resources in the destination. The views of Krippendorf (1992) echoed by Murphy (1983) and Haywood (1988) are that local community's involvement in tourism can facilitate the development of tourism which is more responsive to the local economic and social needs in their communities. These authors are of the view that when local community members are involved in tourism in their areas, they have a sense of ownership of the tourism development process and as such they will provide the necessary support for tourism-related activities and thereby increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of these tourism projects. This idea was further supported by Mbaiwa (2007) who said that this sense of ownership can also contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources by the local community members at the destination. Therefore if the needs and desires of local community members find their way into the tourism development plans, this will increase the legitimacy of the final recommendations and subsequently eases implementation of the tourism development plans. The development and planning paradigm has seen a significant evolution in the meteoric advance of tourism planning from myopic and rigid concerns to more inclusive, flexible, responsive, methodical and participatory approaches. (Inskeep, 1994, p. 86; Tuson, 2006) This has been viewed to be an ideology deeply embedded in beliefs derived from the social and political theories relating to the manner in which society needs to be organised. (Tuson, 2000) This has seen the success and sustainability of developing tourism destinations being dependent on the goodwill and active participation of the host communities. (Nicholas, Thapa, Ko, 2009; Rasoolimanesh & Jafaar, 2016; Rasoolimanesh, Jafaar, Ahmad & Barghi, 2017)

The participation of communities in the development process usually takes consideration of people's rights to information on matters that may affect them. (O'Faircheallaigh, 2010) Community participation as an element of development has been advanced into the development process employing different names and terms by advocates of the phenomenon since the early 1950s. (Tuson, 2000; Blewitt, 2015, p. 43) This is further articulated by Saufi, O'Brien and Wilkins (2014) stating a prerequisite empowerment of locals with adequate capacity of tourism in order to enable meaningful engagement in tourism development. (Cole, 2006; Saufi, O'Brien & Wilkins, 2014) Moreover, approaches of this nature aim to advocate for the sustainable development of tourism as an agent sociocultural and economic development. (Tosun, 2006)

The conception of community participation in tourism development stems from the operation of tourist activities by the local community with economic benefits retained locally together with the accrual of favourable social consequences such as, but not limited to tourism-related education and training. (Saufi, O'Brien & Wilkins, 2014) This is a notion mainly aimed at empowering residents to take their future and livelihoods into their own hands, which has become an expectation and common practice in sustainable tourism development circles. This is a conception further advocated by Scheyvens, (2002, p. 239) and Saufi et al., (2014) asserting that the success of tourism ventures should only be considered if the participation of the local community results in some measure of control over decision-making and equitable sharing of any accrued benefits.

Tosun and Timothy (2003) argued that when local community members are involved in the design of tourism development plans, this results in better implementation of these plans and strategies. The views of Marzuke et al., (2012) are that community participation in tourism development arouses community support which often leads to acceptance of the proposed tourism development in the area. It is argued that the involvement of community members in the planning process of tourism development assists in reducing possible conflicts because all the stakeholders have the opportunity to understand the viewpoints of others. (Jones, 2007) According to Jones (2007) public participation

needs to be informative and therefore such participation needs to be able to further facilitate the ability to finding appropriate solutions for local communities because the process incorporates knowledge, values, and view of local community members and therefore must be able to provide an overview of their problems. This idea is supported by Tosun and Timothy (2003) who indicated that involvement of community members in tourism development strengthens the democratisation process in the destination as the gap between the local community members and bureaucratic decision makers is narrowed during the planning process and as such, this will contribute to the fairer distribution of tourism benefits and costs as local community members are empowered to realise more opportunities and greater benefits from tourism. Given the above, effective community participation in tourism may only be achieved when the communities are empowered economically, psychologically, socially and politically and such empowerment enables the communities to make decisions regarding tourism development and conservation in their communities.

3. Operational Limits to Community Participation in Tourism

According to United Nations (UN), (1981) the formulation and implementation of community participation requires decentralisation of the political, administrative and financial powers of the central government as the planning and management of tourism has been centralised in a way that contribute to achieving pre-determined government objectives. This kind of organisation and planning constraints the ability of local community members to participate meaningfully in the tourism development in their local areas. In South Africa, there is a fair decentralisation of administrative, planning and management of tourism since there is planning at national, provincial and local level and this helps to eliminate the centralisation aspect of the public administration of tourism.

According to Getz and Jamal (1995, p. 186), the lack of co-ordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry is a well-known problem to tourism professionals. This has made it obvious that it is difficult for businesses or government to operate in isolation of each other. This results in the need for coordination mechanism amongst the various tourism stakeholders to work effectively and efficiently together. Because the tourism industry is an amalgam of many sub-sectors, it requires stakeholder involvement in the development process of the industry and therefore this increases the need for stakeholders of the industry to work together as any lack of coordination may frustrate potential opportunities for the community to involve itself in tourism development. In South Africa, government has advocated for public-private sector partnerships to ensure proper co-ordination and cohesion of the tourism industry. However, there seem to be tension around these partnerships since the private sector normally feels that government is not doing enough or there is too much red-tape preventing community members from fully benefiting from the tourism industry.

According to Tosun (2000) most of the local community members are not well-informed regarding tourism development in their areas and as a result this leads to low community participation in tourism development. Therefore there is a need for the general public to be aware of tourism development in their areas so that there is an opportunity for them to participate in tourism development process in a more informed manner. Thus, for the purpose of achieving better tourism development through community participation, information about the structure of local communities and tourism authorities should be made known to local community members to ensure they understand the structures and therefore participates meaningfully in the tourism development process in their areas.

4. Structural Limitations to Community Participation in Tourism

Tosun (2000) is of the opinion that professionals in tourism play an important role in shaping tourism policies and therefore their roles cannot be taken for granted. In this perspective, this leads to a situation where they may feel that they know it all and hence see no need to involve local community members in the process of policy formulation for tourism development because they may view their ideas as amateurish. The argument raised by Tosun (2000) regarding this matter is that it may be understandable and reasonable for professional groups not to allow lay people to become involved in the decision-making process as this may cost the professional groups time and money. However, there is a need to persuade professionals, most of who do not have close contact with local people and lack a tourism background, to accept participatory tourism development as a viable approach for tourism development to be successful.

Tosun (2000) advancing the ideas of Inskip (1988) indicated that it is highly contented that whilst community participation seems to be highly desirable; many developing countries have sufficient experience in this area. He argues that many of the professionals in the tourism industry were trained through traditional planning techniques that did not include community participation approach and therefore have no knowledge of how to incorporate it in their planning.

The lack of qualified human resources in the tourism sector in many local destinations in the developing world has stimulated an influx of employees from other parts of country to work in tourism. (Tosun, 2000) The few attractive jobs requiring high skills are occupied by foreigners and well-educated people from high income groups. This has resulted in low status, unskilled jobs associated with low wages and hard working conditions have been left for members of destination communities who were working on farms or for those unskilled people who moved from less developed parts of the country in order to work in the construction of the tourism industry, and then have become cheap labour input. The above has not only limited the participation of local people in tourism, it has also created a cultural backlash between local people and the seasonal workers and increased the burden on public services.

According to World Tourism Organisation (WTO), (1994) community participation in any project requires considerable time, money and skills in order to sustain it and therefore such may lead to conflicting objectives amongst the local aims since it may raise expectations in the community, which may not be easy to meet. This idea emanates from Murphy (1985) who indicated that effective management of the tourism industry requires day-to-day and season-to-season operational decisions and as such it may not be possible to ask community members to participate in these day-to-day and season-to-season decisions.

According to Reed (1997), any form of introduction of tourism within the communities usually requires funds to be allocated to develop a tourist infrastructure of facilities. However, Pearce (1991) and Long (1991) cautioned that these financial resources needed for tourism investment are very scarce and in most cases, not readily available. This shortcoming has appeared as a major limitation to the implementation of participatory tourism development in developing countries and even in relatively undeveloped regions of developed countries. In many relatively less developed communities financing for tourism is not sufficient at local level, and thus must come from outside interests. When financial resources originate from non-local interests, the loss of control which emerges from outside investment is not easy to overcome. In spite of efforts to encourage community participation, if residents do not own the tourism infrastructure, control over growth and style of development is difficult to achieve. (Woodley, 1993)

5. Research Methodology

In order to complete the study, a self-completing questionnaire was administered in the district municipality over a duration of two months from May to July 2017. Community members were selected randomly and asked if they were willing to be part of the study. The targeted sample were those working in the tourism industry and they included those working in government departments that are responsible for tourism in the District and those community members who are not working in the tourism industry but have an interest in the tourism industry in general. In this case, before a community member was allowed to complete the questionnaire, there was a screen question asking whether they work in the industry or if they have an interest in the tourism industry. Only those respondents who work in the tourism industry and those who do not work but have an interest in the industry were allowed to be part of the study. A total of 150 questionnaires were collected and all of them were usable. The results of the study from a demographic perspective indicated that 45% of the respondents were males whilst 55% were females. The age distribution of the respondents were as follows: 18 – 20 was 13%, 21 – 30 was 27%, 31 – 40 was 22%, 41 – 50 was 15% and 51 – 60 and 60 and above were 11.5% respectively. Out of the 150 respondents, 83 respondents (55%) worked in the tourism industry whilst 67 respondents (45%) were not working in the tourism industry. Out of the 55% of those working in the tourism industry, 10% of them worked in government departments responsible for tourism in the municipality and 45% worked in the private sector.

5.1. Study Area

The study area of the research is Amathole District Municipality, which is located in the Eastern Cape Province. This district municipality stretches along the South Coast from the Fish river mouth to the eastern seaboard. The Municipality is comprised of six local municipalities, namely: Mbhashe, Mquma, Great Kei, Amahlathi, Ngqushwa and Raymond Mhlaba. The Amathole District has an average weighted monthly household income of approximately R3 700, well below the Eastern Cape average of R5 900 per month. It is estimated that approximately 17.3% of households in Amathole earn between R1 and R800 a month, while an estimated 14.0% earn no income, translating to a total of 74 500 households (31.3%) that live below the poverty line. Although the district has a relatively high proportion of households that live below the line of poverty, it also has one of the highest percentages of households that earn between R801 and R6400 a month in the province, which may be attributed to a better supply of unskilled and semi-skilled positions that offer medium wages. The Gini Coefficient dropped from 0.83 in 2010 to 0.72 in 2017, an indication of reduced income inequality because of improved access to education and employment opportunities. The unemployment rate of the district is higher than the absorption rate. Ngqushwa local municipality has the highest unemployment rate of 52.8, followed by Nkonkobe local municipality with 48.1 while Great Kei local municipality has the lowest unemployment rate of 29.8. The employment rate for the Amathole District is currently at 18.3%, an increase from 6.5% in 2013. The government services sector accounts for 38% of all formally employed persons in Amathole. Other notable contributors to employment include agriculture (15.1%) and trade (25.5%). It is important to note here that the tourism industry is not highlighted as a key contributor to employment in the municipality, hence the need for this study to highlight the barriers to community involvement in tourism that could lead to creation of employment possibilities. Although the unemployment rate for the Amathole District has declined from 64.8% in 2010 to 42.9% in 2017, it remains above the provincial unemployment rate of 30.8%, and above the New Growth Path goal of 14% by 2020.

5.2. Research Findings and Discussion

Table 1. Factor Analysis and Reliability

Factors	Eigenvalues of correlation matrix, and related statistics: Active variables only			
	Eigenvalue	% Total Variance	Cumulative Eigenvalue	Cumulative %
1. Limits to community participation are results of lack of Information	6.15	76.9	6.15	76.9
2. Limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination	0.42	5.27	6.57	82.2
3. Limits to community participation are results of lack of trained human resources	0.33	4.12	6.90	86.3
4. Limits to community participation are results of relatively high cost of community participation	0.27	3.33	7.17	89.6
5. Attitude of tourism development professionals	0.25	3.09	7.42	92.7
6. Lack of expertise of tourism developers	0.24	3.02	7.66	95.7
7. Lack of financial resources from government	0.18	2.22	7.83	97.9
8. Centralisation of public administration of tourism	0.17	2.07	8.00	100.0

The results of the study as shown in Table 1 indicates that the most of the variation (76.9%) among the factors of limits to community participation in tourism is represented by a single factor. The quality of the representation by factors limits to community participation are results of lack of information and limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination is 82.2 %.

Table 2. Mean Ranking of Limits to Community Participation

	Total average	Average Mean and Standard Deviation scores							
		Lack of information	Lack of coordination	Lack of trained HR	High cost of participation	Attitude of professionals	Lack of expertise	Lack of financial resource	Centralisation of administration of tourism
Average	2.98	3.20	3.17	3.26	3.25	3.42	3.43	3.25	3.22
Median	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
Mode	4	4	4	4	4	5	2	2	4
P25	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
P75	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	4
SD	1.27	1.30	1.29	1.23	1.15	1.36	1.27	1.40	1.41
Rank-Mean	9	7	8	3	5	2	1	4	6
Rank-SD	6	4	5	8	9	3	7	2	1

When analysing Table 2 above, it depicts that majority of respondents have agreed with the statement of “Lack of expertise of tourism developers” with the highest Mean ranking at 3.43 with Standard Deviation of 1.27 while “Attitude of tourism development professionals” gain the second position (mean 4.43, SD 1.36). Both these statements represent the structural limitations as per Tosun (2000). The above results are in line with the findings of Tosun (2000) where he advanced the ideas of Desai (1995) and Inskeep (1988) who stated that community participation seems to be highly desirable, however, many developing countries do not have sufficient experience in this area. Limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination was the lowest ranked factor (mean 3.17, SD 1.29). Limits to community participation are results of relatively high cost of community participation and lack of financial resources from government were ranked similarly with the mean of 3.25 and standard deviation of 1.15 and 1.40 respectively. The results of the study confirms what

Pearce (1991) and Long (1991) cautioned about when they said that these financial resources needed for tourism investment are very scarce and in most cases, not readily available. According to Getz and Jamal (1995, p. 186), the lack of co-ordination and cohesion within the highly fragmented tourism industry is a well-known problem to tourism professionals. This has made it obvious that it is difficult for businesses or government to effectively involve community members in the tourism industry. This notion is supported by the results of this study with an average mean of 3.20 and a Standard deviation of 1.29.

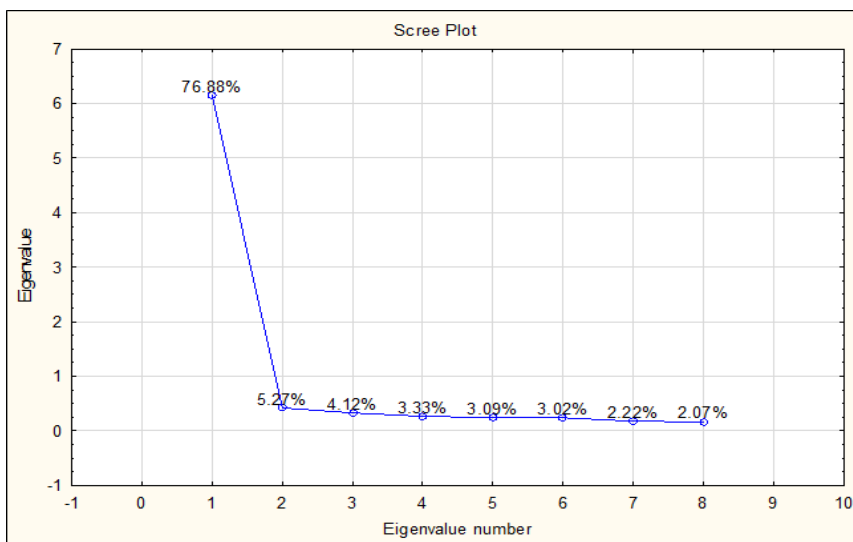


Figure 1. Scree Plot

The results of the study as shown in Figure 1, the Scree Plot confirms the results of Table 1 indicating that the most of the variation (76.9%) among the factors of limits to community participation in tourism is represented by a single factor.

Table 3. Correlations

Variables	Correlations						
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Limits to community participation are results of lack of information	0.809	0.775	0.721	0.739	0.756	0.757	0.735
2. Limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination		0.770	0.788	0.711	0.730	0.731	0.724
3. Limits to community participation are results of lack of trained human resources			0.759	0.724	0.703	0.723	0.725
4. Limits to community participation are results of relatively high cost of community participation				0.668	0.680	0.711	0.693
5. Attitude of tourism development professionals					0.771	0.752	0.672
6. Lack of expertise of tourism developers						0.757	0.777
7. Lack of financial resources from government							0.738

A correlation coefficient gives the strength of the linear relationship between two numerical variables. The sign of the correlation coefficient indicates whether the linear relationship is negative or positive. The results of the study as indicated in Table 3 above confirms that all correlations of the limits to community participation in tourism factors are positive. The results above show that all correlations are higher than 0.5 and therefore it can be conformed as a definite indication of a noteworthy linear relationship. The results also confirms that all limits to community participation in tourism factors

show a high positive correlation. This is also evident from the factor analysis. In fact, almost 77% of the variation among these factors was represented by a single factor (see the Scree Plot, Figure 1).

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA Analysis

One way ANOVA:	Those who are working in the tourism industry and those who are not working in the industry					
	Analysis of Variance: marked effects are significant at $p < .05000$					
Variables	SS	MS	SS	MS	F	p
1. Limits to community participation are results of lack of information	187.6	187.6	64.4	0.4	431.3	0.000
2. Limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination	175.3	175.3	74.2	0.5	349.6	0.000
3. Limits to community participation are results of lack of trained human resources	153.4	153.4	73.4	0.5	309.2	0.000
4. Limits to community participation are results of relatively high cost of community participation	124.6	124.6	71.7	0.5	257.1	0.000
5. Attitude of tourism development professionals	177.6	177.6	97.0	0.7	271.1	0.000
6. Lack of expertise of tourism developers	175.2	175.2	65.5	0.4	395.7	0.000
7. Lack of financial resources from government	218.4	218.4	74.0	0.5	436.6	0.000
8. Centralisation of public administration of tourism	212.4	212.4	85.3	0.6	368.4	0.000

- The results shown in Table 4 above indicate that there was a significant difference in response between respondents who work in the tourism industry and those who do not work in the tourism industry as confirmed by a P-value of less than 0.05 recorded at 0.000 for all the limits to community participation in tourism factors. These results infer that there was a significant difference between the average responses given by the groups under consideration. These results confirmed that the respondents working in the tourist industry differed significantly in their answers on all limits to community participation in tourism factors from those not working in the tourist industry (P-value<0.05). It can therefore be concluded that those working in the tourism industry, due to their involvement, understand the dynamics and challenges of the industry compared with those who are not directly involved in the tourism industry.

- The study also analysed the respondents views of the various barriers to community participation in tourism based on whether they work in the tourism industry or not. The results of the study infer that the respondents working in the tourist industry tend to agree far more often with the statements made about barriers to limits to community participation in tourism than those who do not work in the tourist industry. When analysing the limits to community participation are results of lack of information and limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination, there results clearly show that for both these limits, those working in the tourism industry agreed more with the statements compared with those not working in the industry. A combined total of 51% strongly agreed and agreed with the statement whilst a combined 38% strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. These results show a significant difference in response amongst the two groups. The results for statement on limits to community participation are results of lack of coordination, the results of the study showed similar pattern to the first statement where there was a significant difference in response between the two groups. Those working in the tourism industry strongly agreed (17%) and agreed (30%) whilst those not working in the tourism industry strongly disagreed (10%) and disagreed (27%). Similar patterns of results are also visible in both tables 6, 7 and 8 where there was a significant difference in response to statements regarding limits to community participation factors. The results in both tables infer that those working in the tourism industry agree more with the

statements than those not working in the tourism industry. These results may infer confidence in understanding of the limitation factors by those working in the tourism industry since they have first-hand information about the industry.

6. Conclusion

The results of this research suggest that the eight barriers to community participation in tourism affects the practicality of community's engagement in tourism activities. The findings provide implications for the District municipality (Government) and community members themselves. The lack of expertise and attitude of professionals were the highest ranked barriers by the respondents. The lack of trained human resources personnel, high cost of participation and lack of financial resources were also highlighted as the other barriers to community participation in tourism. Regarding this, government should focus on the practical aspect of tourism development and community involvement coupled with financial support to ease the high cost of community involvement in tourism. Given the fact that the local communities are the ones who are closely affected by tourism and expected to become an integral part of tourism products, local residents who have better skills and knowledge about tourism should be employed in the tourism industry to improve the human resources capability to ensure easy community involvement in tourism. With regards to lack of information barrier, the local communities need to be empowered in order to make decision with regards to what forms of tourism facilities and programmes they want to develop in their respective communities but they should also be able to decide how the tourism costs and benefits will be shared among different stakeholders. Throughout local residents should be empowered to plan and develop tourism for their life and benefits in the communities, so that individuals' active participation in tourism-related issues and practices can assist a successful community-based sustainable tourism development.

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