

# Participatory development of peri-urban and rural poor communities in tourism in the Garden Route area of Southern Cape, South Africa

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## Abstract

Participatory development approach facilitates implementation of principles of sustainable tourism development by creating better opportunities for local people to gain larger and more balanced benefits from tourism development taking place in their localities. The main objective of this study was to examine nature of community participation in tourism development in order to ensure their participation in the benefits of tourism in the Garden Route area in South Africa. A conceptual framework was developed by examining typologies of community participation. Under the guidance of this conceptual framework, a field research was designed and applied where ninety (90) different stakeholders in the tourism industry across the different sub-sectors were sampled. This Chi-Squared test was done to test the statistical significance on the differences of the responses from the respondents in the different group sectors (accommodation, government department, travel/tour operators, transport and other). It was found that community members expect to be involved in three different stages of the process of tourism development which are decision-making, actual development and marketing as well as the management of operating tourism projects in their areas.

**Keywords:** community participation, tourism development, municipalities, tourism stakeholders.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Africa Resources Trust (ART) (2001) community tourism is tourism in which local residents (often rural, often poor and marginalized) are active participants as land managers/users, entrepreneurs, employees, decision-makers, and conservators. It is not simply just community co-operatives running campsites. Tourism has long been considered a means of achieving economic development and regeneration. According to Sharpley (2002) tourism has been widely promoted as an effective source of income and employment, particularly in peripheral rural areas. It is believed that participatory

development approach would facilitate implementation of principles of sustainable tourism development by creating better opportunities for local people to gain larger and more balanced benefits from tourism development taking place in their localities (Tosun, 2000), resulting in more positive attitudes to tourism development and conservation of local resources (Inskeep, 1994), and by increasing the limits of local tolerance to tourism. This idea is further supported by Leksakundilok (2004) who indicates that community-based tourism gives consideration to the rights, roles and responsibilities of communities to manage and control tourism development in order to

maximize benefits for the local people. Hence 'participation' has been claimed as "one of the critical components of success".

The aim is for residents to have a say in decisions over tourism development in their area and work with other stakeholders to develop opportunities for employment, enterprise, skill development, and other improvements in local livelihoods. Some actions, such as participation in planning, may be done by communities acting collectively and some, such as enterprise development, by local individuals and families. Leksakundilok (200) argues that community participation in tourism is one of the mechanisms to empower people to make decisions for their development. However, all of the arguments favour participatory tourism development strategy may not be found equally valid, while some may be thought to apply in some localities and others in different ones. Obviously, not every form of community participation can contribute to the realization of the expected benefits tourism. This is not surprising since community participation can take many forms ranging from manipulative participation to citizen power (Tosun, 1999). Although arguments for community participation in the tourism development process (TDP) have been raised, the forms of community participation desired by the different stakeholders in a tourist destination have not been much considered in the literature. Therefore this paper will focus on the nature of community participation expected by stakeholders in the tourism industry in the Garden Route area accommodation sector, government departments, transport sector as well as travel agencies and tour operators as well as other. In this regard, the main aim of this study is to explore the forms of community participation desired by these interest groups.

## **1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.1 Forms of community participation in tourism development process**

Mowforth and Munt (1998) and Sitikarn (2002) identified seven levels of community participation in tourism and a brief description of these follows.

**Manipulative participation** – participation is simply pretence: "peoples" representatives on official boards. However, these individuals are unelected and have no power. Generally, local workers are told what has been decided (Mason, 2003). According to Leksakundilok

(2004) in this category, tourism development projects or services are generally developed by some rich or powerful individuals, either internal or external and government or private sector, without any discussion with or informing of the people. The village's leader's rubberstamp projects but have no rights to reject them. The benefits go to some elite persons; the lower classes or grassroots may not get any benefits, but receive adverse impacts. This level applies to most conventional community tourism areas.

**Passive participation** – people participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. Passive participation involves unilateral announcements by project management without taking cognizance of people's responses: information shared only belongs to external professionals. Leksakundilok (2004) calls this level informing, where people are told about tourism development programs or projects, which have been decided already, are already developed, or will be developed, in the community territory. Participation might occur in the form of discussing the work that should be allocated or that should involve certain individuals who get benefits from land, labour and local goods. The developers run the projects without listening to local people's opinions. It is a top-down or outside initiative. Some projects can benefit the communities in the long run, but frequently, such top-down projects are likely to have adverse impacts on local communities.

**Participation by consultation** – people participate by being consulted or by answering questions. External agents define problems and determine the information-gathering process, thus controlling analysis. The process does not concede any share in decision-making as professionals under no obligation to take account people's views. Leksakundilok (2004) argues that in consultation; people are consulted in several ways, for example answering questions, involved in research, villager's meetings or public hearings. However the information gained, the problems appraisal, the analysis, the planning and design are processed by external agencies with little consideration of people's view that oppose the developers' projects. Developers may accept some contribution from locals that benefit their projects.

Leksakundilok (2004) states that people may get cash and in-kind returns, but never learn fully about the development, nor do they

participate in decision-making. In the case of government initiated projects, a few local leaders may be appointed as representatives on the committee, but the decision is still in the hands of the project officers. Participation is often measured by the number of people attending the meeting or public hearing or the number of representative rather than the contents of public opinion. In many cases the meetings and public hearings are only to inform the people about those things developers want locals to know, or in order to complete a step that gives the project legitimacy.

**Participation for material incentives** – people participate by contributing resources i.e. labour in return for food, cash or other material incentive. Farmers may provide fields and labour but are not involved in testing or the process of learning; this is commonly called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging technologies or practices when the incentives end. According to Sharpley (2002) an example of this type of participation will be where local employment in tourism services use local expertise and locals are hired in some managerial positions.

**Functional participation** – participation seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals; especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet the project objectives; involvement may be interactive and involve shared decision-making, but tends to arise only after major decisions have already been made by external agents; at worst local people may still only be co-opted to serve external goals. An example is increasing use of local technology, capital and expertise (Mason, 2003 ).

**Interactive participation** – people participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and strengthening local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals; the process involves interdisciplinary methodologies that seek multiple perspectives and use systematic and structured learning process. As groups take control of local decisions and determine how available resources are used, so they have stake in maintaining structures and practices. An example is where hotels are owned by local people or groups of local people or locally owned taxis, tour agencies, and restaurants. Leksakundilok (2004) calls this level interaction; where people have greater involvement. The rights of local people

are recognized and accepted in practice at local level. The representatives of local organizations represent the community. They join the development process in the tasks of analysis, plan development and strengthen the local organization. They take control of local decisions and determine the utilization of resources. This level however, is constrained by the existing laws and regulations or the need to negotiate with concerned agencies. The local groups can manage the tourism services and attractions to meet the special market demands with advice and support from outsiders. At this level, community-based tourism is organized by community organizations, but receives limited support from government agencies, particularly those who control and manage the resources.

**Self-mobilisation** – people participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over resource use; self-mobilization can spread if governments and NGOs provide an enabling framework of support. Self-mobilization may or may not challenge existing distributions of wealth and power. An example will be where local people have accumulated capital from tourism; strengthen and extend their activities. Leksakundilok (2004) argues that at this level, local people may directly contact explorer tourists and develop tourism services by themselves. Some projects may be supported by the NGOs that have had no involvement in the decision-making of the local community. In the case of local businesses, the local community invests in and operates tourism services by their efforts. They may get funding from outsiders who play no part in the decision-making.

In general, the seven levels distinguishes different degrees of participation: in levels one to five, all the power and control over development are in the hands of people outside the community and most of the major decisions have been made before they are taken to the community; at the last two levels there is full participation in which the local residents have power and control over the development or proposal initiatives (Sitikarn). In this instance community members would prefer the last two where there is full participation in the whole development process.

Leksakundilok (2004) also suggests two different levels of participation to those of Mowforth and Munt (1998). The first one is called partnership, where at this level conciliation or compromise between developers and local people is developed in the participatory process. Local organizations elect the leaders or representatives to convey their opinions and negotiate with external developers either in formal or informal committees. They act as partners that agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities on the tourism development projects related to the community. In the case of businesses, the local community has a collective share in the service investment and shares responsibilities in the development. However, most major plans and decisions are already made or being made by professional and external agencies. The benefits may be distributed to the community in the form of collective benefits and jobs, employment and income to the people.

The second is called empowerment. At this level local people have control over all development without any external force or influence. They develop fair and advantageous contacts with outsiders. The community members have a majority of seats or genuine specified powers on decision-making bodies over the projects or programs concerning the community. The local community also has a majority share in commercial development projects. The benefits are fully distributed in the community in the form of dividends and direct income via jobs and products sale. Some communities may receive funding from outsiders but without any influence on decision-making (Leksakundilok, 2004).

These typologies may be a useful tool to identify the spectrum of community participation from the more common passive, manipulative or token forms towards those which are more authentic and interactive. This accords well with the superimposed nature of tourism activity that is frequently grafted on to an economy and society in a 'top-down' manner (France, 1998). However, it should be recognized that these models of community participation have some limitations. For example, they do not consider the number of citizens to be included; no analysis of significant roadblocks (paternalism, racism, gender discrimination, cultural remoteness of local people to tourism, amongst others) is made; in reality, there is no overt reference to ownership of services while the process or the

type of community participation is apparently considered. Another shortcoming of these practices may be that intensity and longevity of community participation is not adequately addressed. In terms of participation, local people may be placed fairly high up the ladder or rung, but enthusiasm may wane over time, be lower than expected, or be pre-empted by other concerns beyond the community's control, such as political and economic stability.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The target population in the study comprised of ninety (90) different stakeholders in the tourism industry across the different sub-sectors of the industry namely private tourism businesses and tourism directorate in the different local municipalities in the Garden Route and of these 66% or sixty (60) completed the questionnaires. Important to note on the survey results of this study, is that the results were based on a five point Likert type questions that were asked to the stakeholders in terms of their perceptions of what roles different departments and community members should play in the process of tourism development. The "**don't know**" category was totally ignored so to simplify the analysis of the data and only the frequencies in other categories, namely (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree) were used and the percentages were then calculated out of that total (100%). Further to this, is that the strongly agree and agree values were put under one category (agree) and strongly disagree and disagree were also put in under one category (disagree). However, to ensure the reliability of the results, a **Frequency table (table 1)** which reflects the different percentages of all the categories of the Likert type questions is attached and cross tables which reflects the **Chi-Squared test** of the questionnaire are included and the percentages of the response "**don't know**" are included for the different groupings of the questions stated above. This Chi-Squared test was done to test the statistical significance on the differences of the responses from the respondents in the different group sectors (accommodation, government department, travel/tour operators, transport and other).

### **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Profile of respondents**

A total of 60 questionnaires were successfully collected out of whom 75% were females while 25% of them were males. Out of the 75% of females who completed the questionnaire, 80% of them are less than 35 years of age, while 33% are between the ages of 18 – 25 years and 47% of them are within the age bracket of 26 – 35 years. Out of the 25% of males who completed the questionnaire, 20% of them are between the ages 18 – 25, while 60% of them are between the ages 25 – 35

while 20% of them are between the ages 45 – 55 years old. The females' educational status shows that 46.7% have Grade 12 certificate, 6.7% have College certificate while 46.7% have degree/Diploma. In contrast the educational status of the males indicates that 20% of them have Grade 12 certificate, College certificate and honours respectively while 40% of them have Degree/Diploma certificates.

**Table 1:** Frequency table showing results of the five point Likert scale questions

Statement	Completely disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Completely agree
Community members should be involved in the decision-making process of tourism development in their area.	0%	20%	5%	65%	10%
Community members should be involved in the management of operating tourism projects in their area.	5%	5%	35%	35%	20%
Community members should be involved in the actual development of the tourism projects in their area	0%	10%	5%	60%	25%
The municipality doing enough to raise tourism awareness.	10%	25%	40%	25%	0%
Municipality should have skill development programmes for community members involved in tourism.	0%	15%	5%	50%	30%
The municipality is creating conducive environment to support the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry.	10%	0%	0%	60%	30%

**4.2 Nature of community participation expected by the stakeholders**

The stakeholders were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with six statements regarding the role local municipalities (local government) should play in facilitating community participation in tourism development and what roles community members should play in the tourism development process.

**Table 2:** Stakeholder's views on the role community members should play in tourism development

Statements	Disagree	Agree	% Total
Community members should be involved in the decision-making process of tourism development in their area.	21.10%	78.90%	100%
Community members should be involved in the management of operating tourism projects in their area.	15.40%	84.60%	100%
Community members should be involved in the actual development of the tourism projects in their area.	10.50%	89.50%	100%

The perceptions of the respondents to community participation in tourism have been dominated by many respondents agreeing with the statements as reflected in table 2. The responses affirm strongly that the community members should be involved in the decision-making process of tourism development in their area represented by 79% of the respondents. There is also a strong indication that community members should be involved in the management of operation of tourism in their area represented by 85% of the

respondents while 90% of the respondents feel that community members should be involved in the actual development and marketing of the tourism projects in their area. The Cronbach Alpha value of community participation in the tourism industry was done and it was found to be 0.839683 and because this value is above the zero; it indicated that the data are reliable. The reliability of community participation in tourism was further strengthened by mean value of the data which was 3.92857 which indicated a strong

agreement with statements on community participation and further to support the

reliability and validity is the standard deviation value which was at 1.96640.

**Table 3:** Chi-squared test to test significant differences on the statements on role of community members in tourism development

Statements		Accommodation (n=18)	Gov/Dept (n=3)	Travel/Tour operator (n=6)	Transport (n=15)	Other (n=18)	Chi-squared test result
Community members should be involved in the decision-making process of tourism development in their area.	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	$X^2=76.3$
	<i>Don't know</i>	16.7%	100%	50.0%	60.0%	16.7%	Df=8
	<i>Agree</i>	83.3%	0.0%	50.0%	40.0%	50.0%	P=0.0000
Community members should be involved in the management of operating tourism projects in their area.	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%	$X^2=29.1$
	<i>Don't know</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	Df=8
	<i>Agree</i>	100%	100%	100%	60.0%	83.3%	P=0.0003
Community members should be involved in the actual development and marketing of tourism projects in their areas.	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%	$X^2=15.8$
	<i>Don't know</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	Df=8
	<i>Agree</i>	100%	100%	100%	60.0%	83.3%	P=0.0450

As shown in table 3, the results of statement (community members should be involved in decision-making process of tourism development in their area) showed more respondents who agreed with this statement. This agreement with the statement is further supported by Inskeep (1991) who indicated that community approach ensures the maximum involvement of the local community in the planning and decision-making process of tourism. Both respondents (100%) from accommodation and travel agency and tour operator groups agreed with the statement while 80% from transport and 50% from other groups also agreed. A Chi-squared test was done to test whether these differences were statistically significant. This test yielded a Chi-squared value which was statistically significant (Chi-squared value = 76.3; DF = 8; P = 0.0000) which means that the response patterns amongst the five groups were statistically significant. When analysing results for statement (community members should be involved in the management of operating tourism projects in their area), the responses varied between “don’t know and agree” categories. In the opinion of Inskeep (2001) to the extent feasible and desirable; there needs to be maximum community participation in the

actual development and management of tourism projects. In three of the categories as shown in table 3, the don’t know category percentage proportion is 50% or higher – even 100% of the Government department group, while in three categories, the agree percentage proportion varies between 50% and 83.3%. A Chi-squared test yielded a statistically significant difference (Chi-squared value = 29.1; DF = 8; P = 0.0000) which means that the response patterns amongst the five groups were statistically significant. When analysing results for the statement (community members should be involved in the actual development and marketing of the tourism projects in their area) the responses ranged from 16.7% from the “other group” who disagreed with the statement while 20% from the transport sector indicated that they don’t know and the majority from other sectors agreed with the statement 100% with other views ranging between 60% from transport to 83.3% from the other group. A Chi-squared test yielded a statistically significant difference (Chi-squared value = 15.8; DF = 8; P = 0.0450) which means that the response patterns amongst the five groups were statistically significant.

**Table 4:** Stakeholder's views on the role of municipalities in the process of tourism development

Statements	Disagree	Agree	% Total
The municipality doing enough to raise tourism awareness.	58.30	41.70%	100%
Municipality should have skill development programmes for community members involved in tourism.	15.80%	84.20%	100%
The municipality is creating conducive environment to support the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry.	10%	90%	100%

There were contrasting views on the perception of respondents as to the role that municipalities should play in the process of tourism development as reflected in table 4. The majority of respondents (58%) are not convinced that the municipality is doing enough in the area of tourism awareness, while 84% of the people expect more from the municipality in the area of skill development for community members that are into tourism related activities, however almost all the people (90%) are appreciative that the municipality has created a conducive environment to support the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry. The Cronbach Alpha value of the role municipalities should play was 0.537600 and because this value is not in minus it indicated

that the data are reliable. The mean value for perception by respondents with regard to the role of municipalities in the process of tourism development was 3.583333 which showed that there was a general agreement by respondents about the role of municipality in the tourism development process. The validity of this perception was further tested by calculating the standard deviation equalling 0.7277781 and this showed that the respondents' statement was consistent and therefore reliable and valid. From the foregoing, the factor analyses of respondents' perception of the role of municipalities in tourism development revealed that variance between three variables were calculated at 52.18% which showed the degree of validity and reliability.

**Table 5:** Chi-squared test to test significant differences on the statements of role of municipality

Statements		Accommodation (n=18)	Gov/Dept (n=3)	Trav/Tour operator (n=6)	Transport (n=15)	Other (n=18)	Chi-squared test result
The municipality doing enough to raise tourism awareness.	<i>Disagree</i>	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	66.7%	$X^2=34.4$ Df=8 P=0.0000
	<i>Don't know</i>	50.0%	0.0%	100%	60.0%	0.0%	
	<i>Agree</i>	16.7%	100%	0.0%	20.0%	33.3%	
Municipality should have skill development programmes for community members involved in tourism.	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	$X^2=37.3$ Df=8 P=0.0000
	<i>Don't know</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	
	<i>Agree</i>	100%	0.0%	100%	80.0%	66.7%	
The municipality is creating conducive environment to support the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry.	<i>Disagree</i>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%	$X^2=5.6$ Df=8 P=0.2349

The results for statement (the municipality is doing enough to raise tourism awareness) in table 5 there was little agreement with this statement. Although all in the "gov/dept" group agreed, it was a very small group (n=3). Of the remaining four groups, the "other" group had

33.3% who agreed while there was even less in the "accommodation" group (16.7%), the "travel/tour operator" group (0%) and the "transport" group (20.0%). In only one group, namely "other", there was more than half who disagreed (66.7%). In the remaining groups

the proportions who disagreed ranged from 0% to 33.3%. Quite a number of respondents fell in the “don’t know” category. In three of the groups this proportion is 50.0% or higher – even 100% of the “travel/tour operator” group. Looking at the five groups, “accommodation” and “transport” had similar response patterns, namely most in the “don’t know” category and the rest in the “disagree” and “agree” categories. The other groups were all different – all of “gov/dept” agreed, all of “travel/tour operator” fell in the “don’t know” category, and most of “other” disagreed. A Chi-squared test was done to test whether these differences were statistically significant. This test yielded a Chi-squared value that was statistically significant at the 5% level (Chi-squared value = 34.4; DF = 8; P = 0.0000) which means that the response patterns among the five groups were statistically significant. When analyzing respondent’s responses to statement (municipality should have skills development programmes for community members involved in tourism); there were generally similar responses from the four groups (accommodation, travel agency and tour operators, transport and others) as shown in Table 5. Accommodation, travel agency and tour operators, transport and others groups agreed with the statement and the proportions ranged from 66.7% to 100%. Although all on government department disagreed with the statement, it was a very small group (n = 3). A Chi-squared test yielded a statistical significant value (Chi-squared value = 37.3; DF = 8; P = 0.0000) which means that the response patterns amongst the five groups were statistically significant. When it comes to statement (municipality is creating conducive environment to support the emergence of small businesses in the tourism industry), the responses in the five groups were very similar in the sense that there was mostly agreement. In three of the groups (accommodation, government department and travel agency /tour operator) there was 100% agreement while in the remaining two, a large proportion agreed (transport = 80.0% and other = 83.3%). The Chi-squared test yielded an insignificant result (Chi-squared value = 5.6; DF = 8; P = 0.2349) meaning that there was no significant difference among the responses from the five groups.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper presented a normative model of forms of community participation in tourism development. The model argues that

community participation is considered as a categorical term whereby various stakeholders in the tourism industry desire to participate in tourism development in various ways which they believe will give maximum returns of benefits of tourism to community members. Different stakeholders in the tourism industry will have different views on community participation in the tourism industry in any given destination. Such views are normally based on how they are involved in the tourism industry, the years of experience in the tourism industry, the sub-sector of the tourism industry in which they are working or employed in, educational experience, and the level of interest in the tourism industry.

Some key characteristics that emerged from this research support the argument raised by the normative model. Participation in tourism by different interest groups varies with differing groups’ power, objectives, and expectations from community participation and these shape their attitudes towards forms of community participation. The results suggest that stakeholders in the tourism industry in the Garden Route area are in favour of participation in the tourism industry by community members in three levels in the process of tourism development. The desired form of participation by the stakeholders can be summarised as follows:

- community participation in the decision-making process of tourism development in their areas,
- community participation in the management of actual operating tourism projects in their areas, and
- community participation in the actual development and marketing of tourism projects in their areas.

In order to ensure the above mentioned form of participation in the tourism industry, stakeholders proposed some roles which the local municipalities and the district municipalities should play in the process of tourism development. These roles and responsibilities can be summarised as follows:

- municipalities should play a leading role in creating tourism awareness amongst the community members so that they are aware of the benefits and costs of tourism development in their areas,



- municipalities should have a proper skills development strategy for all the stakeholders involved in the tourism industry of the area, and
- municipalities should create conducive environment for emerging small businesses in the tourism industry.

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