



Community-Based Tourism Are Tool For Enhancing Tourism With Authentic Hospitality - A Special Reference To South Sikkim

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ABSTRACT

This research is maintainly based on investigating potentials of community based tiourism as a tool for the development of sustainable tourism development in South Sikkim of India. The main purpose of this research is to analyse the applicability of CBT in terms of authentic hospitality, evaluating the impacts of environmental fators on tourism growth, exploring the socio-cultural environment and others. The advantages and disadvantages of implementing CBT is also subjected in this research. The secondary qualitative research method was applied in this research. This research has found that CBT has the potential to facilitative the community participation and protect the cultural heritage. It can promote the environmental conservation in this area. The lack stakeholder coordination has been found to be the key challenge of CBT in South Sikkim.

Keywords: Community-based tourism (CBT), Sustainable tourism, South Sikkim, Authentic hospitality, Local community, Cultural heritage, Environmental conservation, Tourism development, Stakeholders, Infrastructure

Introduction

1.1 Background of the research

Engaging the community in tourism management has been proven an integral component of tourism development in many parts of the world and beyond becoming an important strategy in the context of sustainable tourism. Besides, this method can not only create wealth but also protect cultural heritage and natural systems. Community-based tourism (CBT) in South Sikkim is much more than an isolated experience of nature - it's a chance to thrill visitors with an unparalleled authenticity of Himalayan culture and to boost the local economic and social development (Chandel, 2020). The area embodies the essence and fabric of cultural legacy as well as natural excellence and thus this is the right place to examine the two-way relationship between tourism and community engagement

The beauty of Sikkim's south lies in unrivalled natural diversity that embraces a mighty variety of ecosystems, from a rich canopy of forests to bubbling clear waters, all the while being described by the harmonious melting of different ethnic groups. The soothing surroundings and warm welcome together make the area an even more fixed favourite for travellers who value authentic experiences. Utilizing these unique ingredients, CBFT strives to set out a tourism layout that strikes a harmonious balance between tourists and residents.

The CBH practices in South Sikkim, convey various benefits. First, it facilitates public involvement by picking out tourists' views and considering local communities' opinions in the decision-making process. According to Dias *et al.* (2020), the CBT will lead to the diversification of the economy towards small-scale production and craftsmanship, hence creating an escape route from the traditional way of life. Furthermore, cultural exchange, as well as ecological conservation, are factors that CBT employ to make certain that the original South Sikkim identity and national legacy are in good shape.

Even though the application in South Sikkim strategic sessions works well, there are still some issues. In this context, Labadi *et al.* (2021) asserted the need to build resilience through capacity development, infrastructure improvement, and reliable stakeholder partnerships is a vital key to the long-term sustainability and inclusiveness of the tourism sector. However, through the pooling of all South Sikkim's assets and addressing the existing challenges, CBT records the momentous occasion of moulting into an important driver of sustainable tourism for South Sikkim which will be rooted in community empowerment and genuine hospitality.

1.2 Research Rationale

The CBT in South Sikkim as a comprehensive base of sustainable tourism practices is my case of study. In this spectrum the research rationale lies in learning the underexplored CBT is the direction of this research as this specifically merges the three main clusters of community engagement, cultural conservation, and tourism administration to unfurl solutions for successful CBT management. Most of all, on the implementation of CBT, how it can both improve tourist experiences and also add to the local community and economy of South Sikkim. On the other hand, the oddly specific regional subculture appears to provide a perfect chance to study the role of real hospitality in the creation of memorable experiences and shaping visitors' behaviour, which would rely on the cognitive base of the general discussion on sustainable tourism (Betre, 2022). This knowledge represents a herald of a deeper look at the possible benefits of this intersection between CBT, cultural survivals, and traditional hospitality which shall herald an informed strategy for improving sustainable tourism in the whole of the South Sikkim area and beyond.

1.3 Problem of the Research

The study problem is that there has emerged a very significant gap between the growing popularity of community-friendly tourism (CBT) as a sustainable approach, and the complete absence of empirical knowledge concerned with its practical implementation, fallout etc, particularly in South Sikkim. While there are some positive outcomes that CBT has to offer, the predominant problem is that there is insufficient research which focuses specifically on the nuances and complexities as well as the obstacles and opportunities for the use of CBT in this region. Such a gap blocks the experiential use of CBT during the tourism development strategies workflow, and thus, prevents understanding the inner workings of CBT.

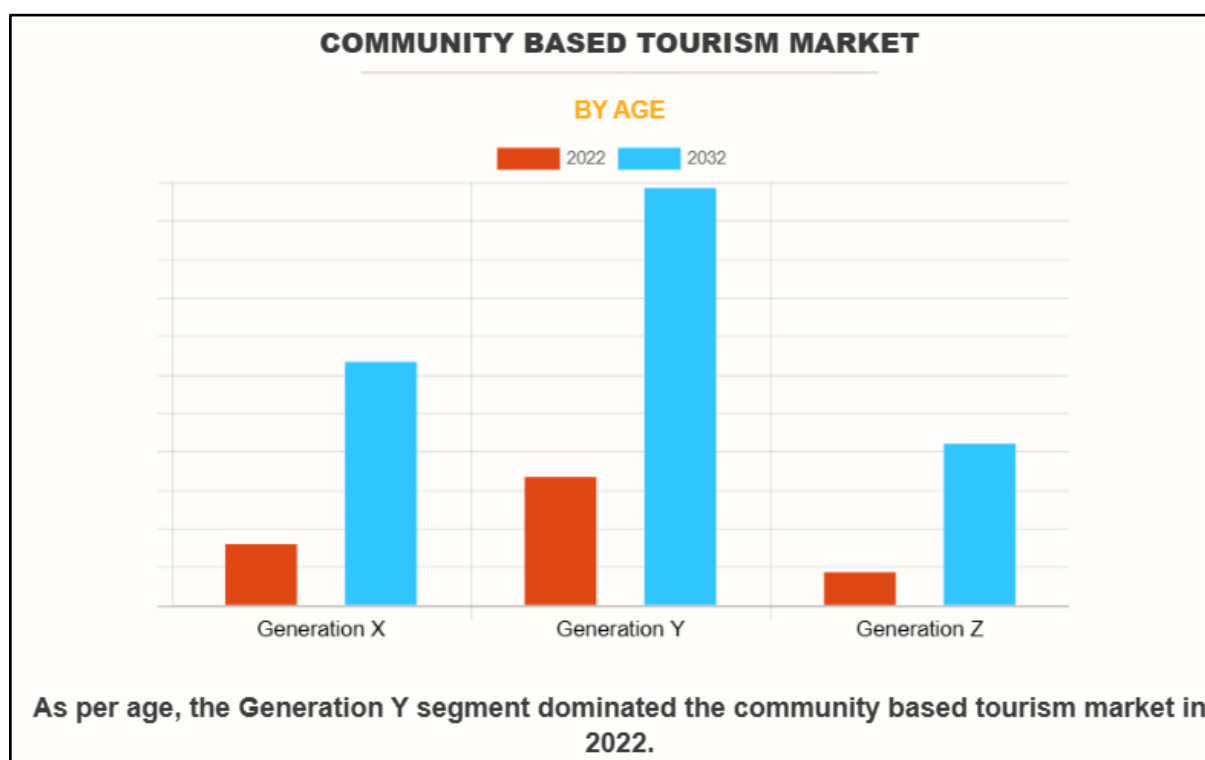


Figure 1: CBT Market in 2022

(Source: Alliedmarketresearch.com, 2023)

Figure 1 illustrates the market share of CBT in 2022 considering the age and generation. this paper looks at what is missing in current mental health programs in South Sikkim and tries to make up for that gap by conducting thorough research on the implementability, challenges and outcomes of introducing CBT in South Sikkim. Through opening the world of CBT's practicalities and its implication for tourists' experiences, the investigation aims to bring the relevant data to the forefront of the officials, the local communities and

the tourism players, resulting in more informed decision-making (Jain and Espey, 2022). In addition, an affirmative reinforcement of the significance of the situational authentic experience is done through the research which seeks ways of strengthening visitor satisfaction and community well-being simultaneously. Thus, the quest of the study intends to assist towards the evolution of sensible tourism practices and also to present a replicable model which can be adopted by others, struggling with the same problems in other parts of the world.

1.4 Research Aim

The research aims to understand community-based tourism as a possible tool for improving tourism in South Sikkim while looking at local hospitality as being the key factor in determining the impressions tourists have and in turning those into the drivers of sustainable development.

1.5 Research Objectives

- To analyse the "community-based tourism" and its application in the context of sustainable tourism is worth exploring through authentic hospitality in South Sikkim.
- To explore and understand the socio-cultural and environmental factors which are predominant in the area of South Sikkim and its role in the growth of tourism.
- To assess the existing scenario in tourism and also discover the opportunities that community-based approaches can afford.
- To indicate the advantages and challenges elements of Community-based tourism in South Sikkim and provide approaches for overcoming them.

1.6 Research Questions

RQ 1: What is "community-based tourism" and its application in the context of sustainable tourism is worth exploring through authentic hospitality in South Sikkim?

RQ 2: What are the socio-cultural and environmental factors which are predominant in the area of South Sikkim and its role in the growth of tourism?

RQ 3: What are the existing scenarios in tourism that also discover the opportunities that community-based approaches can afford?

RQ 4: What are the advantages and challenges elements of Community-based tourism in South Sikkim and provide approaches for overcoming them?

1.7 Research Significance

This research is relatively significant in that it presents guidance for the development of sustainable tourism in South Sikkim as well as similar regions across the world as a whole. Through identification and bridging the gap of perception on the platform of CBT, as well as how it interacts with different sectors, especially with the unique social-cultural groups within South Sikkim, this study reveals essential points for policymakers, tourism practitioners as well as locals. The research results seem to be the addition of the CBT to the diversified development strategy of tourism and the road to economic growth, cultural heritage preservation and environmental conservation as well through tourism in south Sikkim, as per Mukherjee *et al.* (2023). Additionally, the findings from the research highlight the role of authentic hospitality in boosting the quality of tourist experiences which in return are resourceful in the broader debate on sustainable tourism practices. The sense of this research can be seen in its ability to design tourism models in which both visitors and host communities are considered since they are the ones who benefit in the long run and thus it can be a major milestone for the tourism industry that offers a fair and sustainable way of tourism.

1.8 Summary

This research is going to investigate community-led tourism as a factor that seems to improve the offer and further development of this industry in South Sikkim, and, particularly, the role of indigenous people in enhancing tourists' experiences. Thus, through justifying the research issues and questions indicated before, this study aims to theoretically underpin and practically apply the concept of sustainable tourism in the area.

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A literature review provides the groundwork for the investigation being undertaken on community-based tourism (CBT) in the South Sikkim area. This section focuses on state-of-the-art studies, theories and empirical research to exemplify the profound intimate dynamics of CBT, the social and cultural atmosphere of South Sikkim as well as the current state of tourism in the region. This is done by combining central concepts, theoretical viewpoints, and scientific findings; this literature review is directed at the aim of providing a thorough exploration of the factors affecting the implementation of CBT, the impacts on local communities and the environment, as well as the challenges and opportunities arising a sustainable tourism development. This review will be carried out from a critical literature study, which, in turn, prepares the

ground for the following chapters of this work and contributes to the research progress of sustainable tourism in South Sikkim.

2.2 Community-Based Tourism (CBT)

The CBT (community-based tourism) concept is one of the shifts in the tourism industry that brings in local communities as an integral part of planning, administering and reaping benefits from tourism activities. Grassroot community culture is being used here to empower communities by incorporating their local histories and culture, their beautiful nature, and their social relationships to foster a sustainable community and enhance visitor's experiences (Demkova *et al.*, 2022). The idea implies that tourism growth is not the key objective, but mainly the process that supports cultural identity preservation, environment protection and community building among the host population. Partnership between the local community and small-scale service providers as well as local government departments is considered the way to achieve equitable distribution of tourism revenue, community safety, and respect.

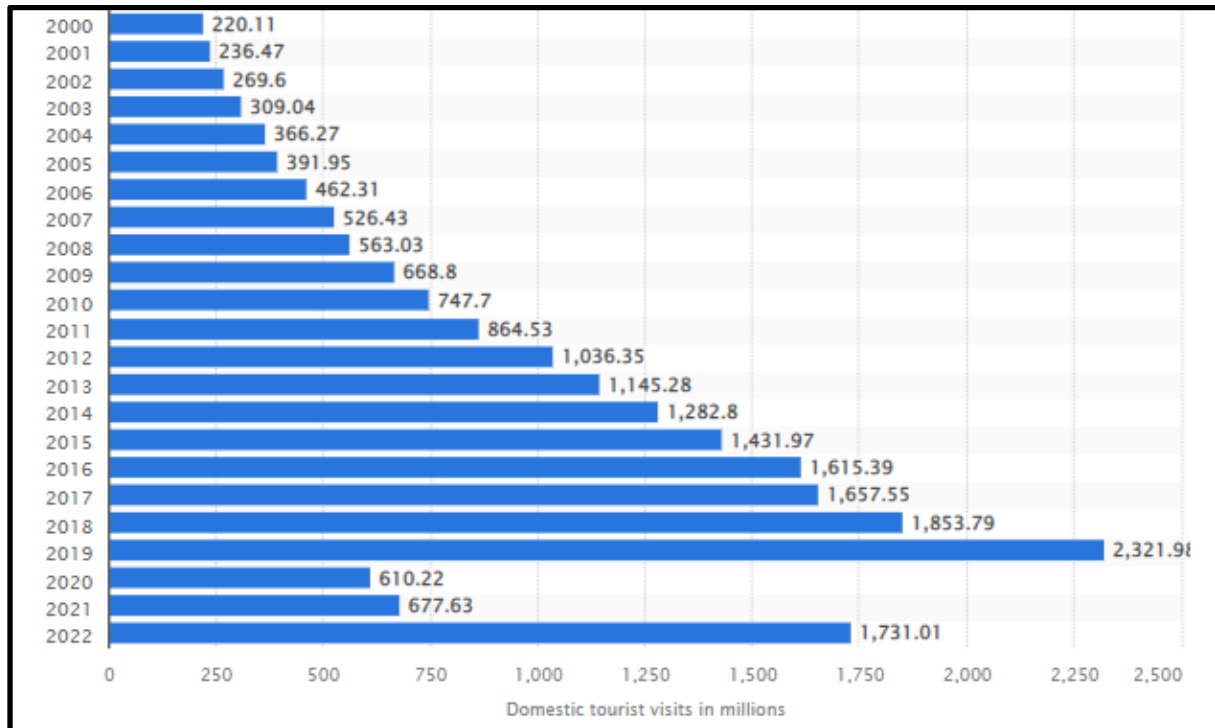


Figure 2.2: Number of domestic tourist visits in India from 2000 to 2022

(Source: Statista, 2024 a)

Figure 2.2 describes that India had approximately 1731 million domestic tourists in 2022, up from 2021. The coronavirus pandemic in 2020 halted the exponential surge in local tourist visits from 2000 to the present nationwide (Statista, 2024 a).

Authenticity and experiential tourism are the most vital components of the CBT where the tourists can experience how the local people indulge themselves in activities associated with the traditions, culture and ways of living. This authenticity is born from community members' direct involvement in guiding tours, hosting homestays, and teaching visitors the cherished artefacts and skills of their region. CBT does it as the highlighting of the exceptional cultural and natural heritage of the destination increases the attractiveness of tourism products simultaneously facilitating the community members to feel proud of and possessive over their own identity.

Additionally, CBT provides responsible tourists with practices that contribute to the sustainability of the environment and native cultures. Ensuring sustainable resource use, reduction of waste, as well as adherence to cultural standards, and norms constitute the core of CBT's principles (Wani *et al.*, 2024). Community-led projects mostly consist of ecological rooms, renewable energy providers and conservation programs to ensure that the long-term benefits of tourism activity are protected with various ecosystems.

Besides, CBT is a propellant of community development, through which people can develop skills, participate in entrepreneurship, and gain social skills. Via training programs, small business development, and revenue-sharing systems, CBT initiatives give the residents a chance to seize control over their livelihoods and make positive living changes. Public revenues themselves can become a mechanism for supporting education, healthcare, and infrastructure projects, thus providing a solution to be socially and economically flexible.

Underpinning Community-Based Tourism is the shift from conventional tourism development toward an integrated way to ensure the preservation of the culture and environment of host communities and the

creation of authentic and memorable experiences for the visitors. CBT has the chance to use sustainability, collaboration and empowerment, to make tourism a way to improve life in South Sikkim and in the whole country.

2.3 Socio-Cultural and Environmental Context of South Sikkim

The social-cultural and environmental atmosphere of South Sikkim is a colourful and elaborate texture of diversity and natural beauty and is the basic element needed for the evolution of the tourism industry in the region. South Sikkim is located in the East Himalayas and is adorned with magnificent views, numerous life zones, and rich cultural values. With a collection of diverse ethnic groups such as the Bhutias, Lepchas and Nepalis, each possessing their own distinctive customs, languages and religious practices becoming the region's industry (Bhutia *et al.*, 2022). This multiculturalism revels in the ethnic festivals, traditional artefacts, and unique cuisines of the South Himalayas resembling life at the mountain foot.

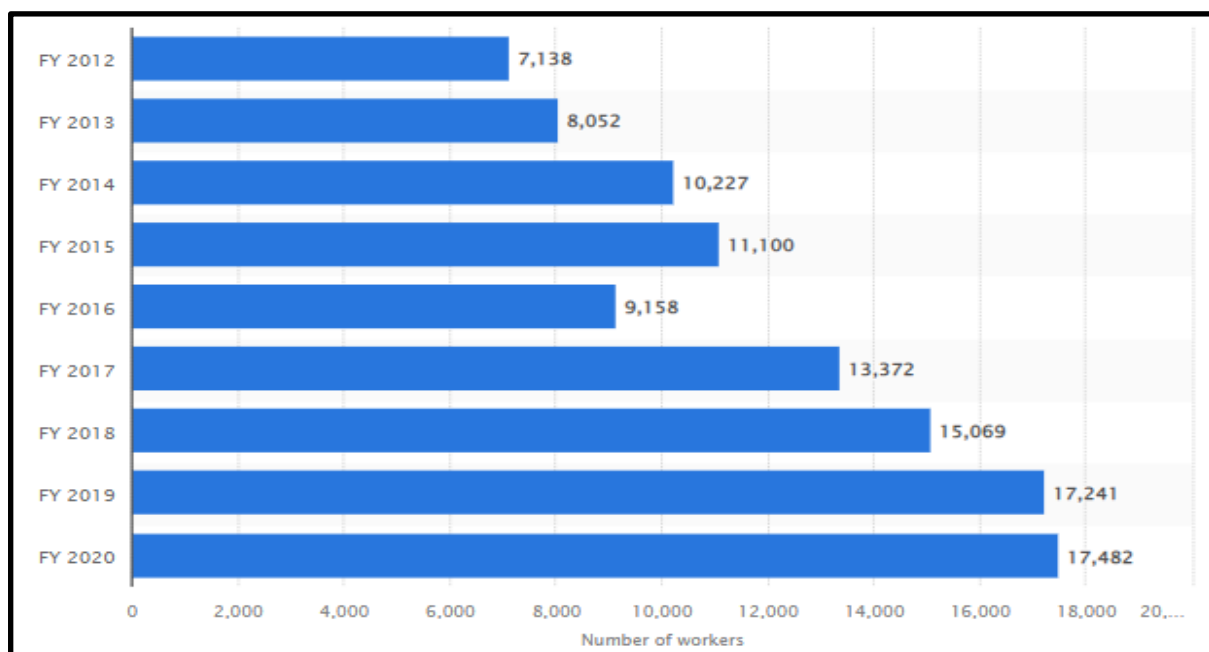


Figure 2.3: Number of workers across Sikkim in India from financial year 2012 to 2020
(Source: Statista, 2024 b)

Figure 2.3 describes that more than 17,000 people worked in Sikkim, India, in 2020. This increased from 2019 and in 2020, it had nearly 13 million Indian labourers (Statista, 2024 b).

Besides, the natural treasure endowments that are found in South Sikkim are unique and they consist of thick forests, gushing waterfalls, and snow-clad peaks. Walking between meandering rivers and lakes that provide trekking, mountaineering, and adventure tourism, the region mimics the composition of Eden. Nevertheless, the area's natural wealth is increasingly subject to the disastrous influences of air pollution, deforestation, and climate change, which negatively affect tourism enterprises in the area.

Along with the abundant natural beauty, South Sikkim has spiritual value and religious significance all over the place. It is because of innumerable monasteries, temples, and sacred sites that can be found throughout its land. These cultural symbols turn into places for debating around religion and spiritual rest and therefore tourists come not only for sightseeing but being connected to a specific area (Chettri, 2021). Moreover, the area is renowned for being the birthplace of numerous locally produced handicrafts, such as weaving, ceramics and carving, which enable the artisans to make a living and enhance the cultural diversity of the region.

Although it has unique cultural and natural assets, South Sikkim struggles with poverty, unemployment, and inability which are accompanied by poor infrastructures. The region is characterized by low coverage in the medical sphere, education, and provision of everyday amenities, which in turn widen the gaps in society and inhibit socioeconomic development. In this regard, community-based tourism performs the function of an economic stimulator and anti-poverty factor as it provides livelihoods, job creation and infrastructure development.

Although the tourism growth rate in South Sikkim is undeniably impressive, there are some causes of worries for the locality disturbance and ecosystems. Substantial urbanization, high-density urbanization, and resource utilization without control are the factors that threaten to damage the components that make the region attractive to tourists. Hence, there is a need to harmonise the evolution of tourism with environmental preservation in a way that the region's social, cultural and ecological integrity would not be significant to be enjoyed now and in the forthcoming generations (Choden *et al.*, 2020). Through incorporating sustainable

tourism practices, engaging local knowledge and resources and crafting human capital, South Sikkim can make tourism a lift for socio-economic development around the region while also preserving the heritage of the community and the environment.

2.4 Current Status of Tourism in South Sikkim

The present condition of tourism in South Sikkim represents a mixture of possibilities and difficulties for this area trying to shape its way to sustainable development. The increasing numbers of tourists, flocking to South Sikkim, have been attracted mainly by the beautiful natural sceneries, cultural heritage and spiritual surroundings (Sapkota *et al.*, 2024). Ravangla, Namchi and Temi Tea Garden are, now, at the top of the list for tourists who wish to enjoy the serenity and water beauty of the magnificent Himalayas. According to Batabyal and Das (2022), besides this, the area serves as a passage to other popular tourist points as well as these are the sites of Nathula Pass and Tsomgo Lake which are considered crucial travelers' destinations as well.

On the other hand, sustainable tourism development is being advocated and the tourist experience is being improved to make one better in South Sikkim. As part of government efforts to resolve the current shortcomings, infrastructure initiatives, such as the upgrading of roads and hospitality amenities, are designed to open the existing sites and ensure access to tourists. Additionally, community-run tourism programs like homestays and cultural tours that are created by the local people help provide genuine experiences and cultural exchanges that build a sense of ownership and participation in the community.

Additionally, a trend of encouraging residents to use responsible tourism practices which are led by an emphasis on conservation and community involvement is observed. As stated by Choden *et al.*, (2020), programs like these can include, waste management, eco-friendly tourism and campaigns on sustainable tourism all these will be aimed at decreasing the negative effects of tourism while at the same time increasing those that are positive to the locals and nature.

2.5 Role of Authentic Hospitality in Tourism Experiences

The role of genuine hospitality in the shaping tourist experience is unquestionable, especially in areas such as South Sikkim where the major attraction itself is cultural immersion. Hospitality which is real brings customer service more than that; it includes interaction with locals between the tourist and any other party, creating a connection and making an understanding. Locally Sikkim, local hospitality is the core element that adds more value to tourism. As per the suggestion of Palit *et al.*, (2020), the local community always welcomes friends, showing their traditions, culture, and way of life to the visitors. This typical communication process makes the journey of tourists unforgettable so that they are often inclined to make another visit. On the other hand, the core of authentic hospitality serves to develop the sustainability of tourism, by building up positive relationships between the tourists and the local communities. When tourists perceive themselves as «VIPs» and face a warm-hearted attitude, they are more likely to keep the traditions intact and contribute to various social projects within the community (Mukherjee *et al.*, 2023).

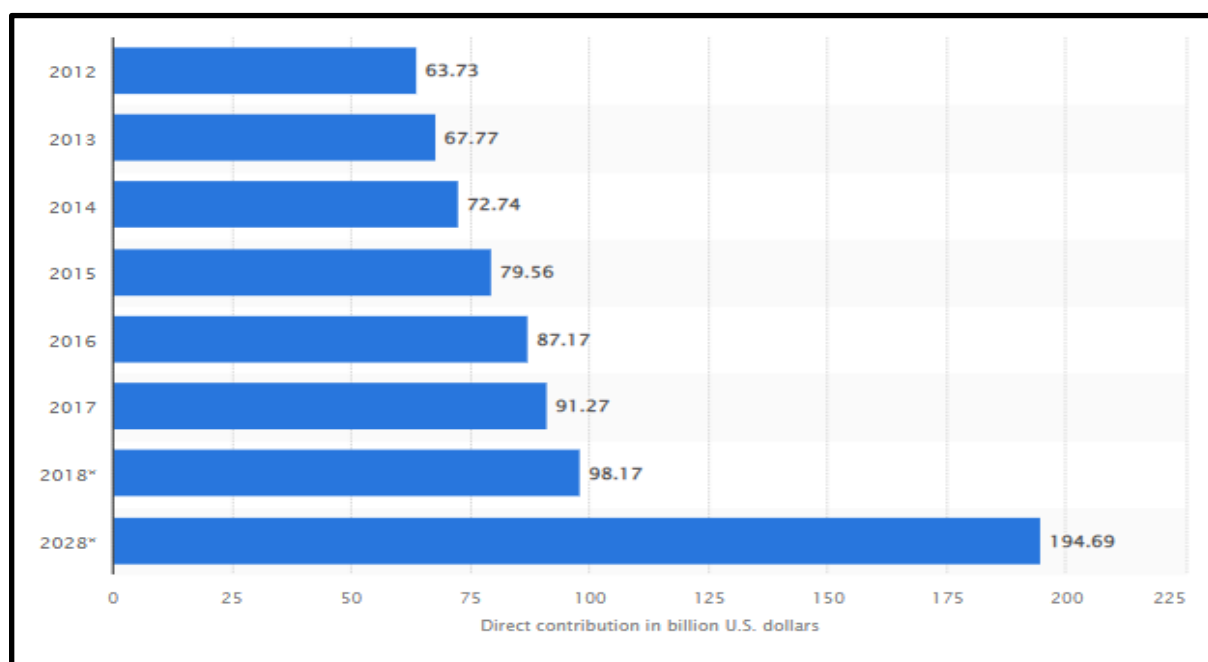


Figure 2.5: Direct contribution of tourism and hospitality to GDP in India
(Source: Statista, 2024 c)

Figure 2.5 states that tourism and hospitality contributed about 98 billion U.S. dollars to India's GDP in 2018, which was expected to reach 194 billion US dollars by 2028 (Statista, 2024 c). India contributed the second most to Asia-Pacific tourist GDP in this aspect.

In South Sikkim, the spirit of humble hospitality classically originates from the layers of the region's vibrant culture. Indigenous society focuses on the representation of their traditions, by showing, for example, traditional dance, cuisine or crafts. These original experiences are similar to the local way of life hence allowing tourists to be part of the community's bundle of traditions and culture. As per Domínguez-Quintero *et al.*, (2020), authentic hospitality is not only about dealing with guests' surface needs, it is also about their inner well-being. Locals usually voluntarily provide travellers with directions to the most interesting sites and narrate their stories in order to make the tourists feel at home and have a goal to get information on the region.

The repercussions of authentic hospitality on the level of single tourists could be related to a bigger plan of sustainable tourism. Authentic hospitality generates linkages that connect tourists with the host communities and in that way stimulate cultural exchange as well as mutual respect. Besides this, it contributes to the maintenance and development of the cultural heritage of the South Sikkim area, in a way that cultural values are transmitted from one generation to another. Besides, also authentic hospitality can become profitable for local communities, as travellers are dedicated to responsible tourism, for instance, they buy locally-made souvenirs or participate in town tours.

2.6 Challenges and Opportunities of Implementing CBT in South Sikkim

Whilst these aspects prompt the growth of the tourism sector in South Sikkim, the industry experiences quite several challenges which at the same time make it unsustainable in the long run. The problems in the infrastructure on the contrary can negatively impact the mobility of tourists as they may not have proper roads, accommodation facilities and amenities which in the end can affect the customer's satisfaction (Bhutia, 2021). Additionally, the absence of multi-tourism offerings without the high-level nature-based attraction obstructs having a variety of visitors and staying their time longer. Furthermore, the existing environmental pollution which is out of the control of the tourism operations can severely damage the ecology of South Sikkim and hence, these very areas which the tourism industry depends upon are threatened.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

“Social Exchange Theory” contributed to the comprehension of the relationship interaction processes between tourists and the host community in community tourism. As this framework explains, social connections stem from the notion of trade where people cooperate and fight by the exchange of assets and costs to maximize the benefit while minimizing the costs (Ahmad *et al.*, 2023). In community-based tourism, tourists are given genuine experiences and cultural exchange bringing them closer to hosts who share the local heritage, in exchange the host communities benefit from services provided by tourists, they receive economic profits and get an opportunity to showcase their culture. This process is driven by shared requirements, trust, and mutuality as a central objective which is that both parties are looking for value maximization through the exchange. On the one hand, challenges may spring forth from the commercial demand of host societies or cultural commodification and on the other hand, host communities may be exploited. By grasping the core of Social Exchange Theory, stakeholders can aim for rewarding reciprocal relationships as an essential element for the success of community-based tourism that is responsible and equitable.

The Community Capitals Framework incorporates the elements of the assets and resources contributing to communities with the addition of illuminating their role in nurturing resilience and sustainability for tourism development. The perspective of community-based tourism is provided with a toolkit for grasping and utilizing the various types of capital that a host community accumulates. Social capital (which encompasses networks of social contacts and trust) contributes to the individual and community ties that require working together in order to achieve goals. Cultural capital refers to the specific features of the culture including knowledge and practices of a community that can be used to get interesting and revelling experiences to tourists. Both financial resources and income received from tourism activities become an important source for the undertaking of community development programs. Human capital, which includes education and skills, is the bedrock for community members to get jobs in tourism-related enterprises and cope with dynamism. The natural capital concept refers to the environmental resources which exist and form a basis for tourism activities, thereby stressing the importance of conservation and the approaches to sustainable management. Finally, political capital comprises the governance structures plus the decision-making processes that give tourism development a sensitivity for inclusivity and participation. The Community Capitals Framework, with its ability to identify and bring the value of the different kinds of capital to the foreground, is a very important tool that helps promotional efforts to protect the area from tourism development pressures.

2.8 Literature Gap

Although community-based tourism initiatives (CBT) and sustainable tourism development do have a growing interest, areas of literature not explored, which thus require further review, still exist. The critical one is determined by the fact that the established literature has neglected specific challenges and opportunities that arise through the application of CBT in the forms in South Sikkim. Despite a huge amount of research on the essence of CBT in different global contexts, it is scanty studies that research the intricacies in the social and environmental context of CBT in South Sikkim. Envisioning the special challenges of communities of South Sikkim, namely the absence of infrastructure and elements of culture as well as climate would be central to the planning of township development that accords to the specific area's conditions.

Moreover, a study should probe how this intervention impacts the socio-economic conditions of host villages in this district. While some of the research indicates that CBT leads to enhanced income generation, cultural legacy, and community empowerment, such research is mainly qualitative. A longitudinal effect assessment of the CBT initiatives on the economic distribution is part of the future work to be done. Moreover, not much has been covered in the literature on the involvement of genuine hospitality ensured by locals in shaping tourist experiences and moralizing the lives of the community in south Sikkim. With the phenomena of addressing these literature gaps, future researchers could make the contribution of creating an understanding of the crucial role of CBT in supporting sustainable development and improving the tourism environment in South Sikkim.

2.9 Conclusion

Community-based tourism (CBT) in Sikkim South, according to the literature review, requires not only the attribute of authentic hospitality but also a very strong and well-defined socio-cultural and environmental context; the current tourism status is reviewed to give an idea of the tourists about the South Sikkim community-based tourism in terms of economic stability and sustainability. However, expansion in CBT studies, such as local specificity and analyzing the effect of CBT on local communities, will be guided by such limited literature that this review marks the starting point for future research into local, sustainable, tourism planning.

Methodology

The methodology part of the study explains the basic approaches and procedures used to realize the research objectives (Jacobsen, 2020). The outline for this section presents the research approach, research question, research philosophy, and design of the research to support the time, rationale, and alignment of the research investigations on the purposes and objectives.

The model of research onion, in particular, provides guidance into the research approach, as this model consists of several layers that represent various segments of the research process, ranging from high-level philosophical principles to specific qualitative and quantitative methods (Lavin, 2021). Through an organized layering process, which carefully reveals these secrets, the purpose of the research is to finally bring out the intricate particulars and peculiarities of CBT in South Sikkim.

At the core of the research onion are study philosophy that includes the values, beliefs and concepts through which knowledge construction and interpretation are done. In this context, the essay studies observe the interpretive standpoint, which reveals a subjective characteristic of the world and reveals the cause of such meanings and perceptions.

Research Approach

The main thing in the process of research is the approach of the research process that involves the critical point of view to help the research process produce a successful study result. There are three types of research approaches: Deductive, inductive and abductive senses for collecting and analysing information (Okoli, 2023). The research will utilize a secondary qualitative approach, which will rely on reading and analyzing existing data in the form of reports, scholarly journals and academic literature to help understand the phenomenon of CBT in South Sikkim. In accordance with this primary qualitative approach, people-depth problems that involve complex social-cultural relationships and help to understand stakeholders' viewpoints are more properly pursued. By this, a research subject is perceived in-depth and intricacy, while all existing data is thoroughly scrutinized.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is supposed to be the set of core concepts, underlying ideologies and understanding that underpin the conduct of research. Throughout the research, it is critical to ask, which research philosophy works appropriately. There are four research methodologies that are widely recognized: positivism, pragmatism, interpretivism, and realism (Lawani, 2020). As the study endorses the interpretive philosophical stance, which in its turn implies the existence of subjective characteristics of reality, and the necessity of exploring social phenomena from the point of view of the actors, who participate in them. The interpretivist perspective which corresponds with the subjective nature of the research, makes room for the

investigation of meanings, perceptions, and experiences. The meaning and the reasons such as, why the implementation of CBT was done in South Sikkim were taken up and elucidated with the help of interpretivism.

Research Design

The research design is descriptive in character and the prime focus is providing a good feel and comprehensive overview of the present status of tourism in South Sikkim and the prospects of CBT to be the sustainable tourism model. Descriptive research gathering, as well as data analysis and pattern and trend recognition, are the key elements of research involving systematic data collection and analysis to describe phenomena (Mezmir, 2020). It creates conditions in which one is able to test research hypotheses and simultaneously adjust approaches to the data collection and analysis procedures. The design of the research incorporates a detailed literature review of reports, literature, and case studies, which concentrates on CBT and tourism in South Sikkim. Data combining and theme dissection will be applied to uncover the main themes, tendencies, and challenges underlying CBT implementation. Consequently, qualitative content analysis is one of the methods performed in the course of investigations of the textual materials they mostly result in an in-depth analysis of their context.

Results and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This will outline the findings of the community-based tourism (CBT) research undertaken in South Sikkim and then subsequently it will proceed with an in-depth discussion of the findings. It is followed by the outline of the research methodology used in the study to gather and analyze data. Then, the major findings obtained through the data analysis are presented and discussed in connection with the research questions and relevant background information. This chapter analyses the result of a psychiatry study aimed at supplementing our understanding of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) in South Sikkim and its relevance to tourism sustainability in the area.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Tourist Demographics

The exploration of tourist demographics gives a clear picture of the behavior, expectations, preferences, and profile of visitors to South Sikkim. Main demographic variables, like age and gender, are as well as nationality, income, and travel interests.

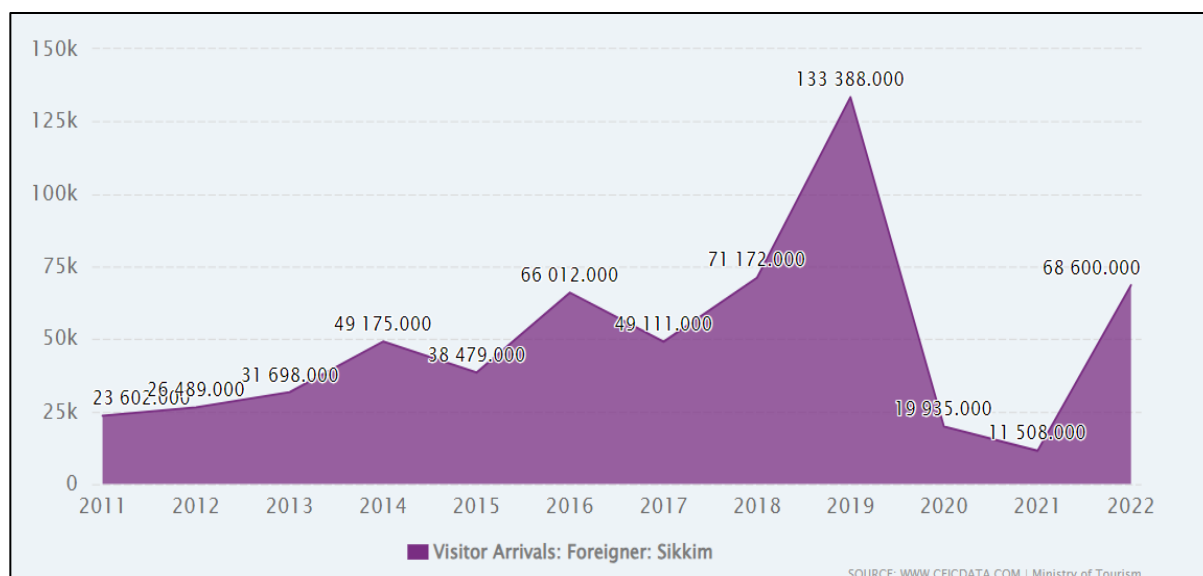


Figure 4.2.1: View India's Visitor Arrivals: Foreigner: Sikkim from 1997 to 2022
(Source: CEI Data, 2022)

It has been reported that the number of tourists visiting South Sikkim peaked in 2019, and 68,600.000 people visited in 2022 (CEI Data, 2022). Through looking at these factors to understand the audience for community-tourism initiatives investment in our locality. For example, data can indicate that a lot of travelers are young adults looking for adventure experiences but some may be older people seeking cultural immersion. This kind of understanding can be used in designing marketing campaigns, product development, and service provision to suit the varying requirements as well as the tastes and preferences of tourists.

4.2.2 Expenditure Patterns

Spending pattern analysis is one of the great sources of data on the issue of how recreation affects the economy of South Sikkim. According to a recent Sikkim Budget Analysis, it is revealed the total GDSP percentage is 2.6%, and revenue expenditure estimated at Rs. 8,234 Crore (PRS India, 2024).

Items	2021-22 Actuals	2022-23 BE	2022-23 RE	% change from BE 22-23 to RE 22-23	2023-24 BE	% change from RE 22-23 to BE 23-24
Total Expenditure	8,105	10,117	11,158	10.3%	11,807	5.8%
(-) Repayment of debt	120	168	168	0.0%	296	76.3%
Net Expenditure (E)	7,985	9,949	10,989	10.5%	11,510	4.7%
Total Receipts	8,964	10,119	11,321	11.9%	11,955	5.6%
(-) Borrowings	1,883	1,698	2,231	31.4%	2,592	16.2%
Net Receipts (R)	7,081	8,421	9,090	8.0%	9,363	3.0%
Fiscal Deficit (E-R)	904	1,528	1,899	24.3%	2,147	13.1%
<i>as % of GSDP</i>	2.5%	4.0%	4.7%	-	4.5%	-
Revenue Surplus	412	66	856	1200.5%	42	-95.1%
<i>as % of GSDP</i>	1.1%	0.2%	2.1%	-	0.1%	-
Primary Deficit	269	796	1,167	46.6%	1,236	5.9%
<i>as % of GSDP</i>	0.7%	2.1%	2.9%	-	2.6%	-

Figure 4.2.2: Expenditure budget 2023-24 (in Rs crore)

(Source: PRS India, 2024)

By scrutinizing the spending behavior of different segments like hotels, eateries, transport, and souvenirs, we can determine to what extent tourism benefits the local economy. Also, spending patterns can allow us to find loopholes where the leakage may be diverting tourism revenue out of the local economy. This data can be used to create programs that will be supportive of locally-owned businesses, and businesses, and increase the local community's tourism dollars.

4.2.3 Satisfaction Levels

In a study revealed by Velmurugan *et al.* (2021), visitors have given positive responses concerning their travel experience in Sikkim. Satisfaction analysis among visitors provides inputs into the degree of their experience in South Sikkim. Through feedback collection related to housekeeping, experiencing attractions, participating in pursuits, hospitality, and overall satisfaction, we can discover the industry's strong points as well as what needs to be improved. Knowing the factors that make a good number of visitors satisfied helps improve experiences and make a destination compete favorably. Not only that but tracking steady and segmented trends within overall satisfaction levels over a given period helps in performance measurements and monitoring.

4.2.4 Community Engagement

Community engagement studies discuss the level at which local community members are involved in different tourism activities and decision-making processes. It can be said that the influence of tourism on the social life of the community by measuring levels of participation, empowerment, and inclusion of its single member (Aghazamani *et al.* 2020). On the other hand, examine how the perceptions and attitudes towards tourism among residents can reveal opinions towards tourism development and point out any existing conflicts or resistances. It is the key factor for developing positive relationships between tourists and host communities, as well as the concepts and methods of sustainable tourism.

4.2.5 Environmental Impacts

According to the Sikkim Forest Government (2020), climate change has been one of the major environmental threats for the world similarly faced in South Sikkim. The assessment of the environmental impacts of tourism activities reveals the consequences of those activities on the natural environment of South Sikkim. Through observation of indicators like resource consumption, waste production, pollution, and habitat degradation, we can assess the sustainability of tourism practices and find areas in need of environmental management and conservation.

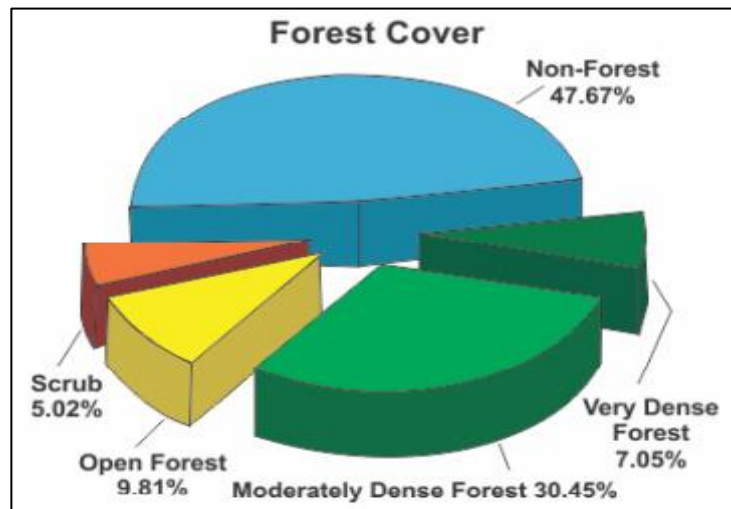


Figure 4.2.5: Forest Density in South Sikkim
(Source: Sikkim Forest Government, 2020)

Furthermore, understanding tourist's attitudes and behaviors toward environmental conservation can inform the creation of educational initiatives and behavior change campaigns that emphasize sustainable tourism practices. Knowing about the ecological footprint of tourism is an important part of reducing its negative effects and maintaining the natural integrity of South Sikkim for future generations.

4.2.6 Cultural Preservation

In the views of Chaudhuri *et al.* (2020), cultural preservation analysis is about the initiatives of cultural heritage protection and enhancement in South Sikkim in harmony with tourism activities. By analyzing how tourism influences cultural assets that include traditional acts, language, art, and festivals, we can discover ways to conserve and promote our culture while satisfying visitors' needs. Similarly, studying the part of tourism in cultural renewing, economic empowerment, and intercultural exposure can be an effective way to use cultural heritage as a tool for sustainable tourism growth. Preserving cultural authenticity along with the requirements of cultural adoption and innovation is necessary for the purposefulness of tourism in South Sikkim.

4.2.7 Stakeholder Perspectives

The stakeholder perspectives analysis involves the views, interests and priorities of different stakeholder groups of tourism development in South Sikkim.

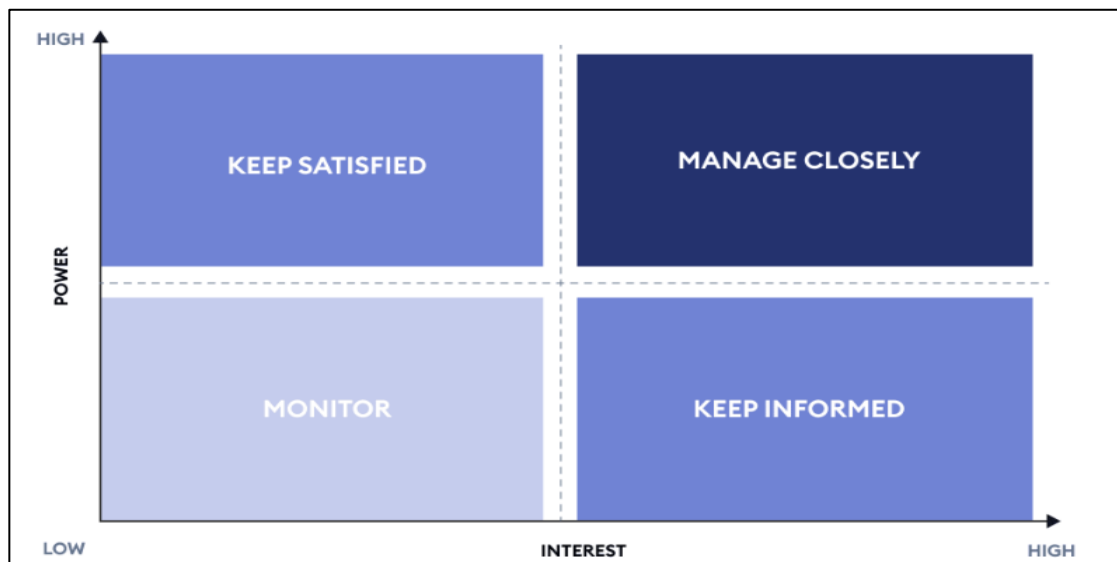


Figure 4.2.7: Stakeholder Matrix Analysis
(Source: Hooray and Bottorff, 2022)

Following the principles of Stakeholder Matrix Analysis, stakeholders including both internal and external are considered to manage effectively based on their level of interest and power (Hooray and Bottorff, 2022). Through interaction with important actors such as government agencies, tour operators, community

organizations, and NGOs we will be able to understand their roles, relations, and contributions to the tourism sector. Furthermore, taking stakeholder perspectives into account can enable the identification of collaboration, coordination, and resolution of dispute zones that will then promote inclusive and participatory decision-making. Addressing the divergent requirements and priorities of stakeholders right from the beginning is pivotal for constructing unity, forming alliances, and accomplishing sustainable tourism development goals of the South Sikkim region.

As per the statement of Elgammal (2022), through evaluating tourists' demographics, expenditure patterns, levels of satisfaction, community relations, environmental consequences, cultural preservation, and stakeholder considerations to developed empiric recommendations for the development of responsible tourism practices. Considering all, data analysis gives deep information on community-based tourism in South Sikkim, helping the strategies to be formulated based on improving the economic, social, cultural, and environmental sustainability of the region.

4.3 Summary

Overall, this chapter on data analysis has presented a detailed investigation of different themes and facets of community-based tourism in South Sikkim. Through the study of tourist demographic data, expenditure trends, satisfaction rates, levels of community investment, environmental impacts, strategies to protect culture, and views of various stakeholders, we have obtained important ideas about the nature of tourism development in this area. These results give an imperative to the policymakers, the practitioners of tourism, and the local community to link the strategies of sustainable tourism with Economic growth and simultaneously the social and environmental issues. This study with its evidence-based advice brings the dialogue on morally sensitized tourism practices and promoting inclusive development in South Sikkim into the spotlight.

Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

Lastly, the research on community-based tourism (CBT) in South Sikkim has contributed worthwhile information about the possibilities of sustainable tourism development in that region. By the way of the exploration of the tourist demographics, spending habits, satisfaction levels, community engagement, and environmental impact, we were able to get a complete picture of the strengths and weaknesses of CBT systems in South Sikkim.

The main results demonstrate that CBT is a feasible tool for sustainable tourism that sparks community participation and protects the cultural heritage and the environment (Prakoso *et al.* 2020). This will lead to the active involvement of local communities in tourism activities and decision-making processes, thereby improving the livelihoods of residents, availing a channel of cultural exchange, and promoting sustainable development. Besides the main point that sustainable tourism can be promoted by authentic hospitality and less negative environmental effects, CBT also improves customer satisfaction and the long-term sustainability of tourism (Hutnaleontina *et al.* 2022).

5.2 Linking with Objective

The collected data would be consistent with the directions that were developed in Chapter 1. For this, analysis of tourist demographics, expenditure patterns and levels of satisfaction help to define the market segment for CBT initiatives and opportunities for developing kg of new products and performance of quality services (Zielinski *et al.* 2020). Also, goal 2 is addressed by an analysis of community involvement and environmental effects which makes a case for social and environmental sustainability of CBT in South Sikkim.

5.3 Recommendation

Strengthen Community Empowerment Initiatives:

Positioning local communities at the heart of CBT is necessary for achieving the lasting and sustainable success of this particular model (Umam *et al.* 2022). This can be accomplished by launching targeted skill-based, knowledge-based, and source establishment programs to equip the community members with the required knowledge for tourism planning, management, and decision-making. These programs could include two-day workshops on hospitality best practices, culture interpretation, natural conservation methods as well and micro-business management. When community empowerment initiatives are funded by various stakeholders, local people more readily come to identify with tourism and put in place the various activities, as well as distribute the benefits of tourism among the community.

Similarly, CBT programs should aim to promote engagement and partnership of people from different community groups including women, youths, indigenous cultures and the marginalized sector (Giampiccoli and Glassom, 2021). By making room for the involvement of local stakeholders and representation, people can be assured of the fact that the opinions, input, and concerns of all community members are reflected during the process of tourism development. Besides, social exchange schemes should be formulated that will encourage collaboration and understanding between tourists and the locals, reflecting the amazing tribal

traditions, languages, and custom practices of South Sikkim as well as creating mutual respect and appreciation.

Enhance Infrastructure Development:

Community-based tourism infrastructure development investment is of utmost importance in order to cater to the growth of the industry while ensuring minimal negative environmental side effects in South Sikkim (Bhutia *et al.* 2022). There should be seriality in the upgrade of road networks, transportation facilities, and access to essential services in the periphery and the outlying areas, giving way to tourists to move to and from tourism spots with safety and comfort. In addition, these aspects should be boosted such as the improvement of accommodation facilities, sanitation systems and waste management infrastructure so as to meet growing tourism numbers while still maintaining the ecological integrity of the area.

Similarly, stakeholders can look for eco-friendly tourism accommodations like green lodges, homestays, and campsites that blend well within the natural surroundings and reduce resource consumption in CBT (Sitikarn, 2021). The stakeholders can achieve this through supporting eco-friendly types of infrastructure which ensures responsible tourism practice and makes the tourism development consistent with the conservation goals of South Sikkim. Among other things, there is demand for new management methods for water and energy, including the use of renewable energy technologies and water-saving methods, to cut greenhouse gas emissions from tourism activities, and to enhance the climate change adapting capacity of local communities.

5.4 Further Areas of Research

Several pathways are available to deepen the research about community-based tourism in South Sikkim. From the economic point of view of CBT, further research is needed to examine the income-generating, employment-creating, and poverty-alleviating effects of CBT on local communities (Dangi and Petrick, 2021). Moreover, research can determine how much different CBT-implemented approaches like homestays, cultural tours, and environmental conservation projects contributed to reaching sustainability goals. In addition to this, the monitoring of socio-cultural dynamics and environmental resilience in the long term should be included in longitudinal research comprising the effects of tourism development and economic growth in the region.

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