

Community-Based Tourism Development Through Empowering Local Stakeholders: A Case Study of Natore

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Abstract

Tourism and community participation can help any place become economically prosperous in several ways. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a very useful tool for data collection and evaluating community-based tourism (CBT) related data. This study has been carried out in Natore Zilla, Bangladesh named Natore Rajbari and Uttara Ganabhaban (heritage) which are not exactly in a core urban area. The study aims to find out the problems and challenges of local stakeholders' activities and the impact on their socio-economic condition. It is applied to different PRA tools like Social Map, Key Informants, Historical Timelines, Seasonal Diagrams, Matrix Ranking, Cause effect Diagram, Pair-wise ranking, and Dream Map for collecting information from the stakeholders who are directly or indirectly involved in tourism. At the time of application of PRA tools, it had been found that for both the researcher and the rural community, the PRA tools seemed to be a very useful, simple but effective research tool for an engineering research tool. After investigating the information, it was found that the stakeholders cannot profit from the tourism industry due to less accessibility of the places and the arrival of the tourists is not even all over the year. It is crucial that archeological structures should be preserved, and that local stakeholders contribute politely to ensure their socioeconomic success. The area can benefit enormously from this research's contribution to its further development.

Keywords: PRA; CBT; Tourism; Stakeholders; Socio-economic condition.

1 Introduction

Community-based tourism (CBT) focuses on involving the host community in the planning and upkeep of tourism development to build a more sustainable sector (Hall, 1995). The involvement of the local population has a tremendous impact on the tourism industry. As one of the main sources of income for many developing countries, tourism has grown to be no less significant or significant than other industrial sectors like oil, food production, or automobile manufacturing. According to World Tourism Organization, 323,000 tourists visited Bangladesh in 2019. This figure is extremely low in comparison to the overall population. As of 22 May 2019, the total population in the area was 166,594,000 people. This is equivalent to one tourist for every 515 residents. Tourism is one of Bangladesh's rising businesses. The total contribution of tourism to GDP is 4.4%, but the global contribution is 10.4% in 2018 (Karim, K.M.R. 2022). In the last decades, tourism has emerged as one of the industries with the quickest rate of growth and a significant contributor to overall revenue. (Bhote, 2018). The positive attitudes and behaviors of the locals are influenced by the economic activity brought about by the tourist spot (Blackstock, 2005). The involvement and cooperation of local stakeholders in tourism activities and tourism destinations not only attract more tourists, but also develops infrastructure, income distribution, and wealth generation, and consequently the sustainability of the local people. The involvement of the local population strongly influences the tourism sector. The tourist destination's economic activity has an impact on the community's optimistic attitudes and actions (Amerta, 2017). Urbanites periodically feel the need to escape their monotonous city existence. In this situation, it would appear that natural and some heritage areas are the best place to relieve tension and offer a chance to rediscover a simpler way of life that, for a while, offers rest and complete quiet (Gantait & Singh, 2021). In the context of Natore Zilla, there are some established historical

attractions, natural beauty, and parks in this area. People are also involved in this side for their income activities. Rural and historical sites like Natore Rajbari, Uttara Ganavaban, Chalan Beel and developed rural tourism attractions Green Valley Park and Patul Mini Cox’s Bazar, and so are the main tourist attractions around. Raja Ramjivan Moitra constructed the first palace, or Rajbari, in Natore. Many stakeholders like different types of shop kipper, auto drivers, local people and others. Students who come for picnics are among the most frequent visitors. Beginning and end of the winter, more picnic groups arrive, which eventually results in an upswing in activity. The Uttara Ganabhavan is an 18th-century (1734) royal palace also known as Dighapatia Palace as it was formerly the seat of the Dighapatia Raj, an aristocratic landed estate in the East Bengal of India. It was built by Raja Doyaram who was the Dewan (minister) of Rani Bhavane. It has a beautiful garden full of various foreign trees and Italian marble stone statues of women. It serves as the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's principal residence in the country's northern part (Uttara Ganabhavan. (2022, July 21) In Wikipedia). Stakeholders and local suppliers who are skilled, trained, and knowledgeable about local attractions and local culture can act as mediators and guides for tourists. (De Jong, 2022). Thus, the study aims to find out the challenges and problems of local stakeholders in tourism development and to identify how the socio-economic condition of tourism stakeholders is affected by tourists and these places.

2 Literature Review

The stakeholders of tourist places can be empowered by developing the tourism sector (Slathia et al., 2015). People like to visit places close to nature and have some historical background for relaxing and enjoying their vacation. The tourism sector can play an important role in a country's economy. Proper maintenance, security, and involvement of stakeholders can attract many visitors (S. Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). Previous research on the role of tourism intermediaries in remote and isolated areas of PNG suggested participatory planning methodologies as a potential means of achieving more satisfactory outcomes for local tourism stakeholders (Bott, Grabowski, et al., 2011). CBT approach to sustainable development with PRA techniques including social mapping and a range of innovative communication tools, such as an “Awareness Patrol (Wearing et al., 2009). Social mapping allows participants to visually record villages and social amenities like roads, schools and health facilities and then to draw into these planned activities such as new guest houses or rural electrification schemes (Maalim, 2006). Stakeholder involvement has been recognized as a crucial component of successful sustainable tourism development because it assists in the coordination and balancing of decision-making based on the requirements and interests of relevant stakeholders. It is a fascinating tourism development strategy (Phanumat, 2015). Successful tourism initiatives are the result of meticulous planning and the involvement of government, business, and community stakeholders (Siti-Nabiha et al., 2015). Tourism can be a big sector of the national economy with the growth of the regional economy.

3 Methodology

Natore Rajbari and Uttora Gonobhobon are places of attraction for tourists. For this reason, there arise a variety of stakeholder activities, here we are defining local stakeholders as our community who are the local shop kippers, auto-drivers, hawkers, picnic arrangers and so on not the tourist who are visiting the places. The methods used for this study consist of observations, informal semi-structured interviews, and conversations with residents and tourists in these places. Observations focused on interactions between locals and tourists and their behavior as well as their opinions and helped frame the analysis. In total, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with the stakeholders. To reach the study aims it is used some PRA tools which are: Social Map, Key Informants, Historical Timeline, Matrix Ranking, Seasonal Diagram, Cause Effect Diagram and Pair-Wise Ranking.

Table 1: PRA tools use to fulfill the aims and its purposes.

Aims	PRA Tools	Purpose
To find out the challenges and problems of local stakeholders in tourism development.	Social map	Identify the location of Stakeholders and activities.
	FGD and Key Informants	To acquire possible information
	Matrix Ranking	They will express their problems and challenges for tourism development.
To identify how the socio-economic	Cause Effect Diagram	Find out the main challenges regarding these issues.

condition of tourism stakeholders are affected by tourist and these places	Pair-Wise Ranking	To observe the causes and effects of tourism stakeholders in tourism
	Dream Map	To explore and articulate the participants' ambitions, aspirations, and goals.

4 Analysis

4.1 Social Map

The most common PRA technique, social mapping, investigate where and how people reside as well as the social infrastructure that is readily accessible, such as roads, drainage systems, schools, drinking water facilities, etc. Local Residents create social maps that are not scaled and show what they perceive to be relevant and significant to them. Through social stratification, demography, settlement patterns, social infrastructure, etc., this strategy provides an accurate picture of the social reality that residents experience (Ferguson & Heinz, 2012). For Rajbari we mainly focused on the stakeholders' location, activity zone, and road network of Rajbari with highway and others, the main landmark beside Rajbari, and historically sensitive places (old buildings, pond, entrance, and winter guest bird living place).

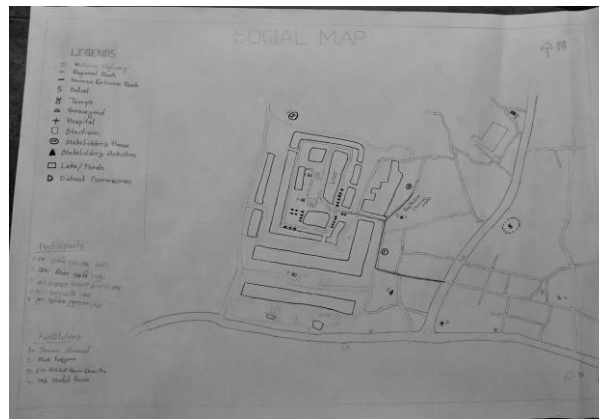


Figure 1: Social map of Natore Rajbari.

4.2 Focus group discussion (FGD) & Key Informants (KI)

Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population (Dooley et al., 2018). Real-time, unfiltered responses on a given topic or in the dynamics of a discussion between participants are required. Questions are rooted in feelings or perceptions and cannot easily be answered with “yes” or “no”. Need to be confident that a relatively small number of responses will answer the question and seek directional information that will help uncover new questions or future ideas for any type of problem or constraint. Here we are doing focused group discussions with stakeholders mainly shopkeepers who are working here for earning. Their main buyers are visitors who visit the Rajbari.

There was some govt. officers like police for social safety & security and an officer of Bangladesh archeology preservation department. They discussed the present and past conditions of the site. Mainly seasonal diagram ideas and time series ideas were gathered from them. They inspect all the acquired information.

4.3 Major Challenges and Problems Stakeholders are Facing: Matrix ranking

Table 2: To identify the major challenges and problems.

Problem/ Challenges	Causes	Poverty	Illiteracy	Local people influence	Less Political influence	Less Accessibility	Less Opportunity	Govt. Aid	Total	Rank
1. Narrow Entrance Road				20	30	50	50	10	160	1
2. Permission				30	10	10	20	50	120	2

3. Health Problem	10	15	10	10	10	10	55	4
4. Location			20	10	50	20	100	3
5. Service	5			10	5		10	35
6. Utility	5				5			15
7. Environmental							10	10
Total	80	80	80	80	80	80	80	

A group from the community was chosen, and they simply and clearly described the tool's goal. The group itself developed an execution goal depending on the specification of the tool. The appropriate challenges were picked to accomplish the goal. To appropriately assess the issues, the group proposed causes. Then rows and columns were used to create a matrix. There were both vertical and horizontal lists of issues and rows. Equal points were given for each cause, and the participants were instructed to divide those points among the issues as they saw fit. The ranks were totaled and ranked according to descending order.

A matrix ranking was conducted to identify the major challenges and problems in the area. The considered problems were narrow entrance roads, permission, health problem, location, service, utility, and environmental problems. Poverty, identity, illiteracy, local people influence, less political influence, less accessibility, less opportunity, government aid, etc. were the causes taken into account to evaluate the above problems. The participants were invited to allocate 80 marks over the problems against each cause. Then the total was ranked according to descending order.

Participants allocated more marks for the problem of the narrow entrance road in front of Natore Rajbari. This road isn't improving yet. That's why tourists and other people and stakeholders are faced many problems.

4.4 Cause Effect Diagram

A Cause-and-Effect Diagram is a graphical tool for displaying a list of causes associated with a specific effect. It is also known as a fishbone diagram. The graph organizes a list of potential causes into categories. Cause effect diagram has been used for the study and the analysis of the problems of a wide range of areas including various matters. Cause effect diagram of Rajbari, Natore can be placed as follows-

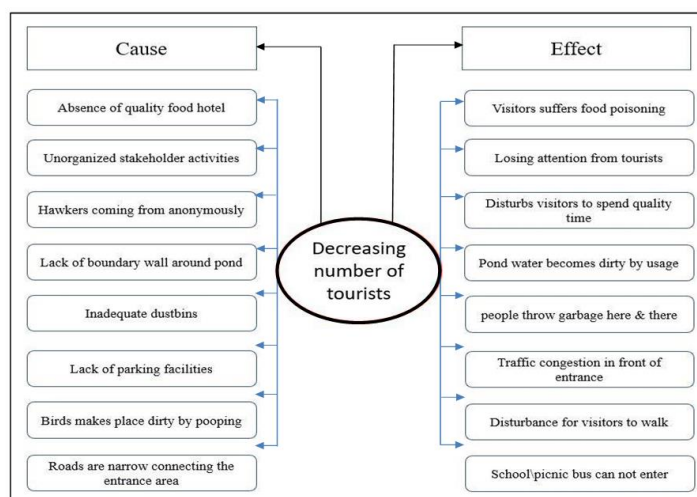


Figure 2: Cause-effect diagram

4.5 Pair-Wise Ranking: Decreasing Number of Tourists

A pair-wise ranking method was conducted in Natore Rajbari and Uttara Ganabhaban in Natore Zilla on prioritization of decreasing the number of tourists in the community. A group of participants was chosen, and they were informed of the study's goal. The issues that arise as barriers were then listed. After that, a matrix with rows and columns was created with those barriers. The relevant box was filled out with the problem's related number. After the event was over, each issue's frequency was counted and noted. The ranking was done based on the frequency of occurrences; therefore, the most pressing problem was the one that showed up more frequently in the matrix. Finally, the names of participants and the date conveyed the tool was mentioned and the outcome was presented to the community by a group member.

Table 3: Pair-Wise Ranking of Decreasing Number of Tourists

Problems	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Frequency	Ranking
1. Absence of quality food hotel.	-	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	5
2. Unorganized Stakeholder activities	1	-	1	1	1	1	1	0	6	2
3. Hawkers coming anonymously	0	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	1	7
4. Inadequate dustbins	1	0	1	-	1	0	1	0	4	4
5. Lack of boundary wall around the pond	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	8
6. Lack of parking facilities	1	0	1	1	1	-	1	0	5	3
7. Birds making places dirty by pooping	0	0	1	0	1	0	-	0	2	6
8. Roads are narrow connecting to the entrance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-	7	1

According to the group, the following issues are the most pressing ones Absence of quality food hotels, Unorganized Stakeholders activities, Hawkers coming from anonymously, Inadequate dustbins, Lack of boundary walls around the pond, Lack of parking facilities, Birds making places dirty by pooping, Roads are narrow connecting to the entrance. They were arranged in a matrix with rows and columns that were both horizontally and vertically listed. A comparison of two issues was then made, with the most serious one being mentioned. To determine which issue was the most serious in the area, the total number of problems related to one issue were counted and ranked in descending order.

The result shows that the most pressing problem is roads are narrow connecting to the entrance which appeared seven times and the second is the unorganized Stakeholder activities and lack of parking facilities as third where inadequate dustbins ranked fourth. Hawkers coming from anonymously, Inadequate dustbins, Lack of boundary wall around the pond, and Birds making places dirty by pooping is not a serious problem compared to other problems in tourist places. Therefore, finding solutions to overcome roads that are narrowly connected to the entrance problem is the prime issue that we have to give priority.

4.6 Dream Map

A dream map is a form of a visualization tool that is used to assist people in exploring and articulating their ambitions, aspirations, and goals. It is often constructed on a whiteboard or big piece of paper and consists of drawing a map of the individual's optimistic scenario, including the actions and milestones that must be achieved to get there. The map is intended to assist the individual in identifying areas of their life in which they would like to focus and creating actionable steps to achieve their goals. Dream maps are usually applied to personal development opportunities, working counseling, and monitoring programs.

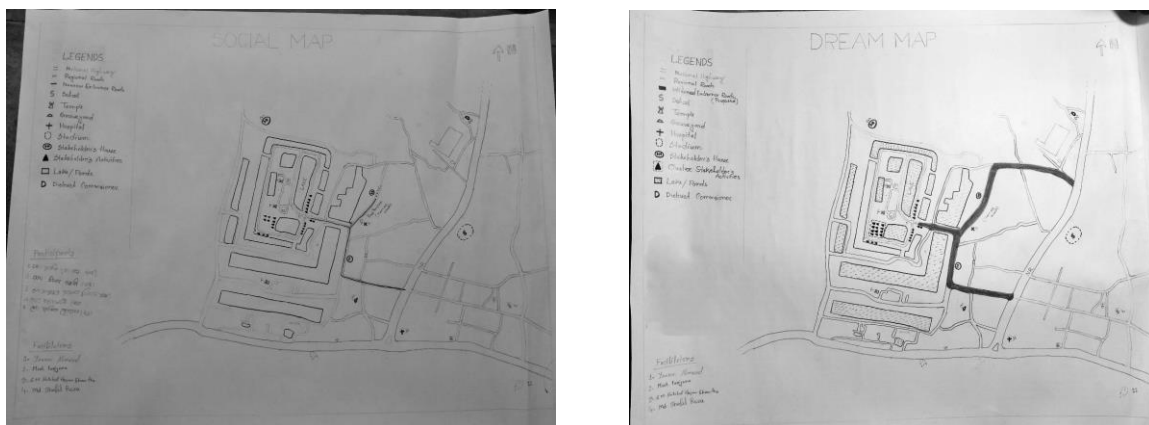


Figure 3: Present social map and Dream map of Natore Rajbari

Community people, residents, and stakeholders are facing problems with the narrow road entrance to the Natore Rajbari. They expect that the road to the entrance should be wide enough. It will create good transport facilities, stakeholders will get space for loading-unloading their products, and school buses or picnic buses will enter the area easily. By widening the road, it will create a great impact on the socio-economic condition of the people and stakeholders of the area. Local people want organized stakeholder activities so that they can refrain from disturbing the tour.

5 Conclusion

Community-based tourism sector development has become a major concern of government and businessmen. The tourism sector has a diverse effect on society and for that reason, it earns people's attention day by day. From this study, we mainly find that the stakeholders of Natore Rajbari mainly faced problems with mismanagement of the surrounding place. Among them, the narrow road in front of Rajbari creates a barrier for tourists to reach the place in their vehicles. Which discourages people to visit Rajbari. There has a seasonal impact on stakeholders' livelihood level. In winter the workload of stakeholders increased and in summer it lessens. From the historical transect, we mainly find that there is a negative change in Rajbaris' wealth conservation and there is a positive impact on the Uttara Ganavaban resource management system. Similarly, pair-wise ranking system and matrix ranking system we find that the narrow road of Natore Rajbari creates a major challenge to stakeholders' existence and preservation of activities of this place. Natore Rajbari and Uttara Ganavan are the main tourist attractions of Natore. It encourages people to visit Natore to come close to our history. It also creates an opportunity for people to take a visual touch of our history. The study exploring community-based tourism development through empowering local stakeholders in Natore has shed light on the potential for transformative change within the tourism industry. By actively engaging local stakeholders, this study demonstrates that community-based tourism initiatives can achieve a harmonious balance between economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Government should come forward to take the necessary steps to preserve the historical importance of these places. And also, should take steps to turn the place stakeholder friendly to improve their livelihood method. The community-based tourism sector of Natore can bring positive development to Natore shortly.

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