

Community Engagement in Tourism Management: A Holistic Perspective from Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

The study made an inquiry into the core potentials of community engagement in tourism management of Bangladesh with special focus on a holistic perspective. We know that community engagement in tourism management anywhere in the world gives improved uptake of services and increased outcomes. Community engagement in tourism management is examined holistically in Bangladesh's tourism scenario. The study uses secondary data from published journal articles, books, reports, and firms' documents to make discussions, findings, and recommendations. Significant findings show that while community engagement in tourism is low, more inclusive techniques can have beneficial results. The challenges found are unequal distribution of economic advantages, poor governance, environmental deterioration from uncontrolled tourism, and insufficient local community capacity-building. The research calls for comprehensive policy reforms recognizing communities as vital stakeholders, providing equal economic opportunity, strengthening governance, and improving environmental conservation. Fostering public-private-community participations and using technology for inclusion are essential policy proposals. In conclusion, the study recommends an integrated tourism management model that empowers local people, distributes benefits fairly, and assures Bangladesh's tourism sector's long-term viability to sustain.

Key Words: Community Engagement, Tourism Management, Sustainable Tourism, Inclusive Tourism, Community-Based Tourism, Tourism Governance, Local Empowerment, Cultural Preservation, Environmental Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

Tourism drives worldwide economic growth and cultural interaction. Tourism may boost employment, cultural preservation, and local livelihoods in developing nations like Bangladesh. The success of tourism management depends on economic factors and local community empowerment in decision-making. Therefore, community participation as well as engagement are essential for sustainable tourism because it addresses the local needs, ambitions, concerns and fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens.

Community perspectives can play a very significant role in tourism management of Bangladesh, which is characterized by extensive cultural diversity, abundant natural resources, and profound historical significance. Bangladesh's distinctive attractions survive on the environment-human link from the verdant Chittagong Hill Tracts to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Sundarbans

mangrove forest. Despite these strengths, Bangladesh's tourism sector suffers from infrastructural facilities, environmental degradation, lack of policy coordination, and deficient community engagement. Moreover, conflicts, unsustainable practices, and marginalization of vulnerable communities result from a lack of comprehensive community participation.

Community engagement in tourism management implies local stakeholders' active participation, cooperation, and empowerment throughout planning, implementation, and assessment activities. This paradigm positions the community as a tourism co-creator rather than a recipient. Effective participation may promote sustainable tourism by addressing socioeconomic inequality, cultural heritage, and environmental stewardship. Socio-cultural dynamics, governance systems, and local institution capabilities complicate meaningful community engagement.

Bangladesh strongly advocates holistic community participation and engagement in tourism management. Ecotourism and cultural tourism programs in the nation have involved the local communities to varying degrees. In places like the Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar, eco-friendly projects often ignore the indigenous and underprivileged voices and concerns. Thus, understanding the tourism development and community engagement requires a holistic approach that includes the socioeconomic, cultural, environmental, and governance factors.

This research takes a comprehensive approach to community engagement as well as participation in the tourism management of Bangladesh by examining the pros and cons of legislative frameworks, participatory techniques, and stakeholder interactions for sustainable tourism. It highlights how inclusive and participatory tourism management can transform the sector, emphasizing the need for policy innovation and stronger stakeholder engagement to achieve the sustainable and equitable outcomes. By exploring avenues for community-driven tourism, the study offers practical suggestions that will assist the policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in promoting more inclusive, community-centric tourism management in Bangladesh.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Tourism management now recognizes community participation as essential to sustainable growth. In developing nations like Bangladesh, such involvement varies in level and quality. The country has rich natural and cultural tourism resources, but its tourism management practices often fail to involve local populations in planning and decision-making. This exclusion limits tourism's advantages for residents, raising issues about sustainability, environmental damage, and social inequality.

Despite the worldwide focus on participatory tourism, Bangladesh has little research on community participation and engagement in tourism management. Most studies focus on the economic implications, infrastructure issues, and tourism destinations. These features are crucial but they often neglect the community engagement's socio-cultural and governance aspects, creating a vacuum in understanding how inclusive and comprehensive approaches might be implemented. Many Bangladeshi efforts, especially in environmentally and culturally sensitive areas, use top-down development strategies that ignore the local voices and indigenous knowledge systems. It requires to bridge the gap between community involvement theory and tourism management practice. Without bridging this gap, tourism growth in Bangladesh risks perpetuating inequality, weakening cultural heritage, and endangering ecological sustainability. While international frameworks recommend participatory techniques, the complexity of Bangladesh's tourism sector requires context-specific solutions which will align with its socio-cultural dynamics as well as governance issues. Existing literature has neglected traditional leadership structures, community-based organizations, and regional resource allocation inequities. Policymakers, practitioners, and local communities also need to

collaborate for producing balanced and equitable tourism. Studies should have been done to understand community participation better and influence policy and practice by locating the findings in these contexts. This gap highlights the need for a deeper look into Bangladeshi tourism management's community engagement hurdles and potential. This research is undertaken to convert tourism into a vehicle for inclusive growth and community empowerment and engagement by taking a comprehensive holistic approach.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To examine community engagement in tourism management of Bangladesh's various areas and its strengths and weaknesses.
- To discover the mismatch between community-driven tourism's potential advantages and current practices that exclude local stakeholders.
- To create a sustainable community engagement framework for tourism management of Bangladesh from a holistic perspective.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This research examines Bangladeshi community participation and engagement in tourism management using secondary data. It reviews articles, synthesized literature, policy papers, and reports to understand a complete picture. Books, peer-reviewed academic papers, government reports, and UNWTO reports are essential sources. This involves analyzing socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental issues that affect participation and structural impediments to inclusiveness. Data collection identifies research on community engagement, sustainable tourism, and policy frameworks of Bangladesh and similar contexts. The data are organized and interpreted using thematic analysis to identify trends, gaps, and development possibilities. This comprehensive and contextualized study uses only secondary data to explore community engagement in tourism management of Bangladesh from a broad and interdisciplinary perspective. At the end, it studies holistic theoretical frameworks provided by scholars in this field to develop a holistic community engagement model for sustainable tourism in Bangladesh.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN TOURISM MANAGEMENT

Community engagement has emerged as a cornerstone of contemporary development practice, fostering collaboration between individuals, organizations, and institutions in addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. Therefore, community engagement is defined as the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar circumstances, community engagement emphasizes inclusivity, participation, and empowerment (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2011). Community participation in tourism management includes local communities influencing tourism activities in their locations. It includes decision-making, planning, execution, and assessment. Community engagement stresses participation and collaboration above top-down models focusing on external stakeholders. This assures tourism development meets local needs, ambitions, and values.

Tourism management now includes economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects to promote sustainable and fair growth. Community engagement in tourism management denotes the active participation of local stakeholders in the planning, development, and governance of tourism initiatives, which is basically serving as a cornerstone of the process.

Sustainable tourism fundamentally depends on such community involvement for ensuring a balance between economic growth and the preservation of cultural and ecological heritage. According to Tosun (2006), community engagement in tourism involves the active participation of local residents in decision-making, benefit-sharing, and the protection of cultural and natural resources within tourism destinations. In the absence of meaningful participation, tourism may become extractive, with external stakeholders reaping the benefits while local communities are left to bear the costs.

Thus, community engagement is fundamental for ensuring that tourism contributes to sustainable development and community well-being. Public discussions, participatory rural assessments, and tourism committees are effective for community participation methods. These systems allow citizens to issue the voice, share the knowledge, and participate in the decision-making. By doing so, communities can become tourism co-creators rather than passive recipients.

Importance of Community Engagement in Tourism

Tourism management requires community engagement and participation for numerous reasons:

- **Sustainability and Environmental Conservation:** Local communities promote care of natural and cultural resources. Participants promote responsible tourism, safeguard heritage places, and prevent environmental deterioration.
- **Social Equity and Inclusivity:** Tourism typically marginalizes indigenous peoples and women. Community participation guarantees tourism advantages for all stakeholders, especially disadvantaged communities.
- **Conflict mitigation:** Community participation helps to detect and resolve conflicts when tourism development disturbs local customs or ecosystems. The collaborative method creates confidence between developers, legislators, and locals.
- **Enhancing Tourism Experiences:** Local communities enhance tourism's cultural and experience offerings. Destinations are enhanced by real insights into local cultures, traditions, and lives (Brooks et al., 2023).

Challenges to Community Engagement in Tourism

Community Engagement in Tourism is not easy to implement as it faces manyfold challenges some of which is shown below:

- **Lack of Awareness and Education:** Local populations are sometimes unaware of tourism development procedures or their involvement. This information gap hinders participation.
- **Power Dynamics and Inequalities:** Uneven power relations between communities, government, and private developers can diminish the local voices.
- **Resource Constraints:** Communities may lack financial, technical, and institutional resources to manage tourism (Zhang et al., 2023).
- **Cultural Sensitivities:** Tourism initiatives that disrespect local norms and traditions may face opposition or social friction, weakening involvement attempts.

Relevance of Community Engagement in Bangladesh

Community participation is essential for Bangladesh, as it supports the preservation of its rich cultural heritage and promotes the sustainable use of natural attractions. However, centralized decision-making, inadequate infrastructure, and socioeconomic disparities continue to restrict the meaningful community engagement. Despite these challenges,

community-driven tourism initiatives are gaining momentum in regions such as the Sundarbans and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. By adopting holistic and participatory approaches, Bangladesh has the potential to develop a more sustainable, inclusive, and equitable tourism sector (Zhang et al., 2023).

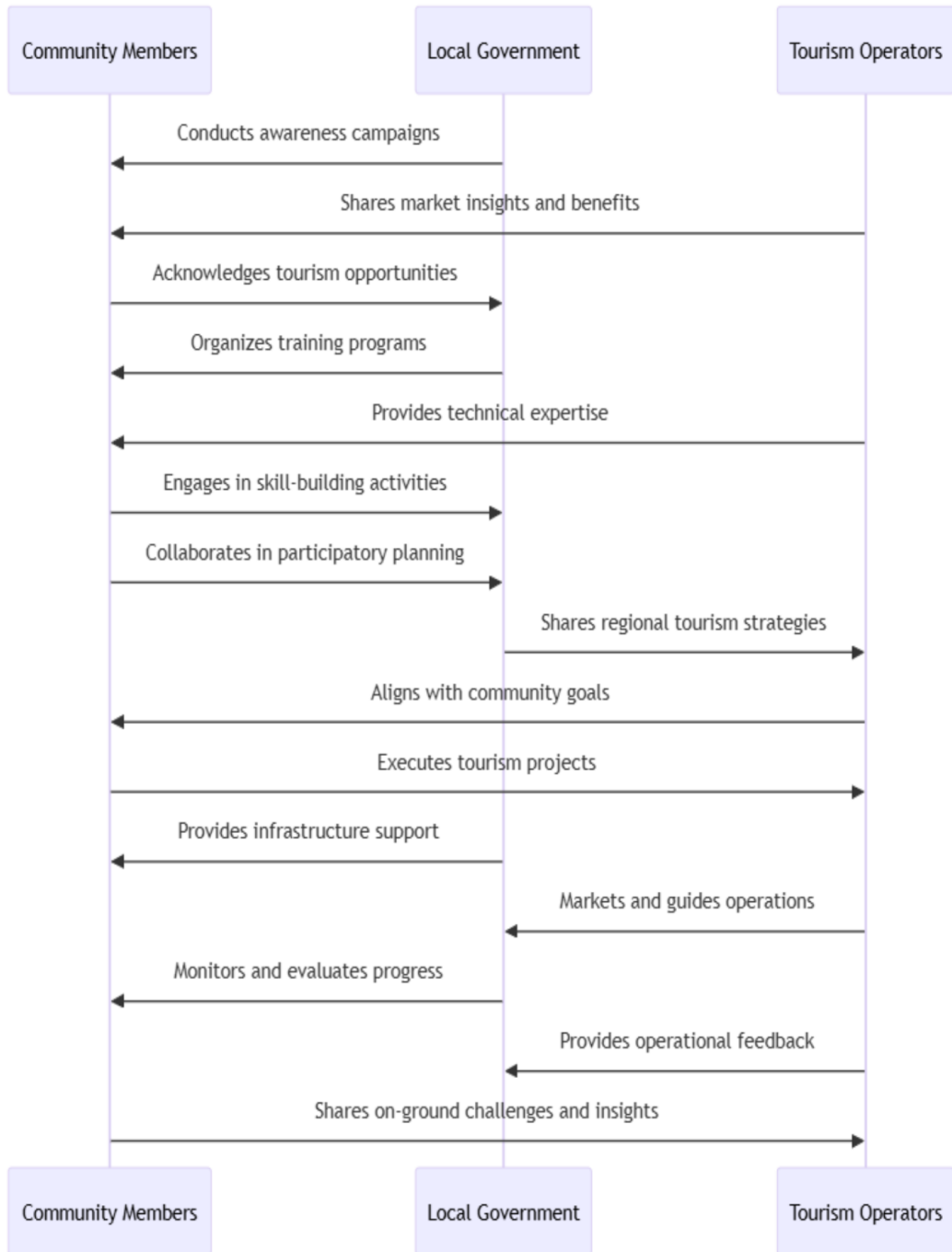


Figure 1: Sequence Diagram for the Process of Community Engagement in Tourism Management

Global Best Practices in Community Engagement

Many successful examples show how community participation may alter tourism management worldwide. Nepali and Costa Rican community-based tourism projects demonstrate how local engagement may promote sustainability. These methods emphasize local leadership, tourism-funded communal welfare, and cultural preservation. These strategies emphasize integrating tourism development with host community values and goals.

BANGLADESH'S TOURISM LANDSCAPE: OBSTACLES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism in Bangladesh may boost economic growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability. Bangladesh has several cultural, natural, and historical tourism attractions. Cox's Bazar, the world's longest continuous sandy beach, and the Sundarbans, the world's biggest mangrove forest and home to the Bengal tiger, are natural attractions. Bandarban and Rangamati hills offer ecotourism and scenic splendor, while haor wetlands offer biodiversity and seasonal landscapes (Khan et al., 2022).

There are many cultural and historical attractions, from the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Paharpur to Bagerhat's mosques and temples. Vivid festivals, local crafts, and unique cuisine enhance cultural tourism. These assets lay the groundwork for a strong tourism business representing the nation's identity.

Tourism Obstacles of Bangladesh

Though Bangladesh possesses rich natural, historical, and cultural resources with significant potential for tourism development, the industry faces numerous obstacles that impede its growth and long-term sustainability. They are:

- **Inadequate Infrastructure and Facilities:** Poor transportation, housing, and visitor facilities make many tourism locations unattractive. These infrastructure issues disproportionately affect rural and isolated places where community-based tourism may develop.
- **Environmental Degradation:** Overtourism in Cox's Bazar has caused pollution and habitat loss. Unregulated tourism growth worsens these issues, endangering natural assets (Lekgau & Tichaawa, 2019).
- **Limited Community Participation:** Many tourism planning and decision-making processes ignore the local populations. Exclusion hinders community involvement and causes disputes, exploitation, and missed opportunities for socioeconomic empowerment.
- **Governance and Policy Gaps:** Tourism management is hampered by a lack of a national tourism policy, ineffective enforcement, and poor stakeholder cooperation. In particular, lacking of community-driven tourism frameworks cause unequal growth (Luo & Yun, 2023).
- **Negative Perceptions and Safety Concerns:** Political instability, safety, and little global marketing influence international perceptions of Bangladesh as a tourism destination. These impressions hurt the country's tourism competitiveness.

Despite the obstacles, ecotourism, cultural preservation, and regulatory changes can boost the tourism industry in Bangladesh. Community participation is key to turning these obstacles into sustainable and inclusive tourism growth. Bangladesh may use tourism to promote fair growth, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability by adopting holistic approaches and encouraging community engagement.

Tourism Opportunities of Bangladesh

Despite these obstacles, Bangladesh's tourism sector offers considerable opportunities for sustainable development. They are:

- **Growing Demand for Ecotourism and Cultural Tourism:** Ecotourism and authentic cultural experiences are increasing worldwide, which suits Bangladesh. Community-based tourism in the Sundarbans and Chittagong Hill Tracts may draw ecotourism and cultural curiosity (Chatkaewnapanon & Kelly, 2019).
- **Technological Advancements:** Online booking systems, social media marketing, and virtual tours can boost the location exposure and tourism experiences. These technologies can promote local products and services, encouraging community engagement.
- **Policy Reforms and International Partnerships:** Bangladesh's National Tourism Policy addresses structural hurdles and promotes sustainable practices. Community-based projects might benefit from technical assistance and funding from international organizations like the UNWTO.
- **Youth and Women Empowerment:** Tourism can empower youth and women economically. Training and skill development can help them to participate in tourism business.
- **Cultural and Heritage Preservation:** Tourism can help to preserve Bangladesh's rich artistic and historical legacy. Traditional crafts, festivals, and performing arts may generate money and preserve intangible heritage through community-led efforts.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Community participation and engagement are key for solving the Bangladesh's tourism obstacles and at the same time maximizing the tourism prospects. Tourism programs that include local stakeholders in planning, decision-making, and execution may meet the community goals. This method boosts tourism sustainability, social cohesion, and economic empowerment.

Community-based tourism projects in the Chittagong Hill Tracts have shown how local engagement may enhance eco-friendly practices and cultural heritage. Traditional wisdom may be integrated into conservation efforts, as shown in the Sundarbans. These examples demonstrate the need for a comprehensive approach that recognizes community contributions and assures fair rewards (Uddin et al., 2021).

Table 1: Challenges and Solutions in Bangladesh's Tourism Industry (Uddin et al., 2021).

Challenge	Underlying Cause	Impact	Suggested Solution
Weak Infrastructure	Limited public investment	Accessibility issues for tourists	Public-private partnerships
Lack of Marketing and Branding	Insufficient promotion abroad	Low international numbers of tourists	Develop targeted marketing campaigns
Environmental Degradation	Unregulated tourism activities	Loss of biodiversity	Implement ecotourism regulations
Security Concerns	Perception of instability	Reduce the confidence of tourists	Improve safety and security measures

Table 1 summarizes the main challenges, causes, effects, and remedies in the country's tourism sector. This systematic analysis helps the policymakers, researchers, and tourism practitioners to assess the current limitations and develop targeted solutions. It also highlights key issues and strategies relevant to Bangladesh's sustainable and inclusive tourism development.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN TOURISM

Community engagement is essential to sustainable tourism, promoting inclusion, equity, and local empowerment. In developing nations like Bangladesh, constraints limit the effective community engagement in tourism management. These constraints originate from socioeconomic gaps, governance issues, cultural dynamics, and insufficient capacity building. The main barriers to community engagement in tourism of Bangladesh and its effects on sustainable tourism are shown in the following diagram (Uddin & Akther, 2019).

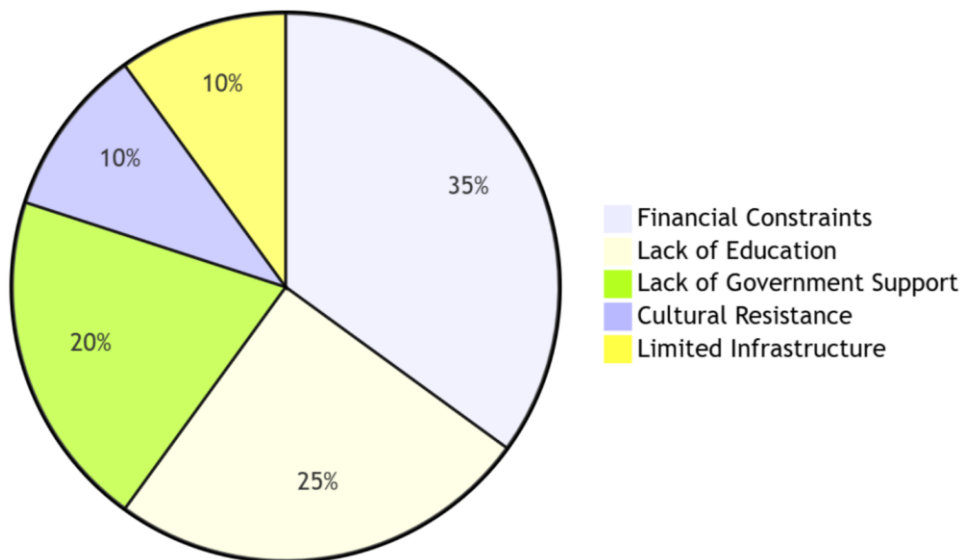


Figure 2: Share of Different Barriers to Participation in Tourism

The pie chart in Figure 2 depicts the distribution of various obstacles to community involvement in tourism. The chart divides the barriers into five categories: Financial Constraints, Lack of Education, Lack of Government Support, Cultural Resistance, and Limited Infrastructure. Each section shows how communities and tourism management stakeholders see each obstacle's relative significance or share.

This graphic aids in identifying the most critical barriers and how they could prevent local populations from actively participating in tourism-related activities. The following section narrates those barriers:

Socioeconomic Barriers: Tourism participation is significantly impacted by socioeconomic inequality. Rural and underprivileged Bangladeshis generally lack the money, knowledge, and skills to participate in tourism. This exclusion fosters inequality and restricts tourism's poverty-reduction potential. Tourism developments seldom benefit all community members equally. Tourism often benefits a tiny elite while marginalizing women, indigenous peoples, and the impoverished. Unequal advantages weaken trust and discourage tourism management engagement (Pranita et al., 2023).

Governance and Policy Limitations: Inefficient government and fragmented policies hinder community engagement. Top-down tourism development in Bangladesh prioritizes government and business sector interests above the local needs and aspirations. Lack of community engagement and collaboration frameworks reduces decision-making openness and accountability. Policies that contradict each other worsen these issues. For instance, the

National Tourism Policy promotes sustainable tourism, but its grassroots implementation is typically insufficient, creating a gap between policy goals and community reality. Participatory tourism is also hampered by poor government, business, and community collaboration.

Cultural and Social Constraints: Cultural norms and social dynamics might hamper community tourism engagement in places with strong traditions and hierarchies. Traditional power dynamics and gender norms limit women and youth participation for decision-making in many sections of Bangladesh. Tourism projects are less inclusive due to cultural restrictions, diminishing community benefits. Local communities' ignorance of tourism's benefits is another issue. Many communities perceive tourism as a non-essential activity, leading to apathy or hostility (Miller et al., 2017).

Environmental and Resource-Related Challenges: Tourism development typically strains local resources, conflicting with community demands. Unregulated tourism in Bangladesh's Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar has degraded the environment, depleted resources, and destroyed habitats. These disadvantages reduce community support for tourism initiatives, especially when locals pay the environmental costs without benefits. Lack of community engagement in ecological planning exacerbates these issues. Local knowledge, which might promote sustainable behaviors, is often disregarded in favor of foreign solutions (Kumar et al., 2023).

Capacity and Knowledge Gaps: Local populations' lack of education, training, and technical skills hinders community engagement. Communities in many places of Bangladesh lack the skills and understanding to plan and manage tourism. This gap affects their ability to participate in decision-making and take advantage of tourism jobs and entrepreneurship. The lack of capacity-building efforts exacerbates this. Government and commercial players seldom fund community training initiatives, leaving people unprepared for tourism growth. Lack of readiness fosters external reliance and excludes local perspectives.

Power Imbalances and Stakeholder Conflicts: Tourism management sometimes involves power asymmetries between communities, governments, and commercial developers. Private tourism projects in Bangladesh sometimes emphasize profit above community wellbeing, causing conflict and mistrust. In environmentally vulnerable areas, large-scale tourism initiatives displace local inhabitants or limit their resources. Stakeholder disputes hamper community participation. Fragmented and unsustainable tourism practices come from the lack of collaborative conflict resolution and interest alignment frameworks.

Implications for Sustainable Tourism Development: Community tourism involvement constraints affect sustainability. Tourism programs without community input risk becoming exploitative and unsustainable, losing local stakeholder confidence. This exclusion also hinders tourism's social justice, environmental protection, and cultural preservation promotion. Inclusivity, openness, and capacity building are needed to overcome these hurdles. By empowering communities via education, training, and fair resource sharing, stakeholders can promote participatory and sustainable tourism in Bangladesh (Sultana et al., 2023).

Community engagement is essential for tourism management, but socioeconomic, cultural, and institutional impediments hamper its implementation in Bangladesh. Government, commercial sector, and community partners must collaborate to build an inclusive, equitable, and sustainable tourism framework. By tackling marginalization and empowering local communities, Bangladesh can harness the transformational power of tourism for development and community empowerment that is to go for holistic approach.

HOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Sustainable tourism development must address economic, environmental, cultural, and social factors. Tourism in Bangladesh may boost socioeconomic development and artistic preservation. Thus, comprehensive methods are essential. Holistic tourism management balances stakeholder requirements, empowers local communities, protects the environment, and boosts economic growth. There are different tourism models under holistic approach which are depicted in the following table:

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Sustainable holistic Tourism Models

Tourism Model	Objective	Key Features	Benefits	Challenges
Community-Based Tourism	Empower local communities	Community-led initiatives	Income generation, empowerment	Lack of resources or training
Ecotourism	Environmental conservation	Low-impact tourism	Biodiversity preservation	Over-tourism risks
Cultural Tourism	Preserve cultural heritage	Focus on local traditions	Cultural exchange, authenticity	Commercialization of culture

Table 2 summarizes sustainable tourism approaches' goals, features, benefits, and drawbacks. It helps to explain how different models work and contribute for tourism sustainability.

Action plans for holistic community tourism management

For policymakers, researchers, and tourism practitioners, Table 2 simplifies model comparison and helps to assess its applicability in diverse circumstances. It emphasizes the need for customizing the sustainable tourism initiatives to the local needs while balancing environmental, social, and economic goals. Experts suggested the following action plans to achieve the holistic community tourism management:

Integrating Community Engagement in Tourism Planning: Sustainable tourism requires community involvement. Local stakeholders are involved in tourism planning, implementation, and assessment in holistic methods. Such engagement ensures tourism projects to meet the local needs and goals. Empowering Bangladeshi communities to own tourism initiatives promotes trust, accountability, and equality. Participatory planning workshops, community forums, and tourism committees can enable inclusive decision-making. Tourism initiatives that include traditional knowledge improve cultural authenticity and environmental sustainability (Bhuiyan et al., 2022).

Promoting Environmental Stewardship: Holistic tourism emphasizes environmental protection. Tourism must encourage biodiversity and natural resource protection while minimizing the ecological consequences. The Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar are environmentally vulnerable, so Bangladesh must be diligent in environmental management. Tourism policies that promote waste management, renewable energy, and sustainable infrastructure are holistic. Community-based conservation projects engage locals in maintaining natural areas and boost ecotourism. Offering incentives to communities for protecting the Sundarbans can assist in balancing conservation and tourism.

Fostering Economic Inclusivity and Equity: Holistic tourism development requires equitable economic advantages for all stakeholders, especially the underprivileged communities. Bangladeshi tourism programs routinely overlook women, indigenous cultures, and the rural poor. Holistic initiatives address these inequities by providing inclusive employment,

entrepreneurship, and capacity building. Supporting tourism SMEs like local homestays, artisan manufacturing, and community-guided tours may boost the local economies. Microfinance and skill development can also help the underrepresented communities to join into the tourism value chains.

Strengthening Cultural Preservation and Authenticity: Cultural preservation and promotion are key to holistic tourism. Culture is both a tourism asset and a fundamental part of community identity. Tourism can promote and maintain Bangladesh's art, music, food, and festivals while making money. Culturally aware tourism should incorporate local people as tradition keepers. Heritage tourism projects in Bagerhat and Paharpur can employ local guides, craftspeople, and entertainers. This participative methodology preserves cultural integrity and provides real tourism experiences (Bhuiyan & Bhuiyan, 2023).

Enhancing Policy and Governance Frameworks: Holistic sustainable tourism requires good governance. A coordinated policy framework incorporating government, private sector, and community interests may address resource management, conflict resolution, and fair benefit-sharing. In Bangladesh, increasing governance means simplifying policy execution, improving inter-agency collaboration, and enforcing rules to avoid exploitation and environmental damage. To include local voices in tourism decision-making, holistic governance demands open and inclusive stakeholder cooperation platforms.

Leveraging Technology and Innovation: Technological advances can improve tourism sustainability. Online booking systems and virtual tours can boost destination visibility while lowering the environmental impact. Using technology to promote lesser-known places will help Bangladesh to divide tourism gains more fairly. Sustainability innovations like green infrastructure development and artificial intelligence for tourism management may assist the holistic tourism aims. The adoption of technological tools for skill development, resource management, and communication can substantially strengthen community engagement by fostering collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and sustainable growth.

Case Studies and Global Best Practices: Bangladesh may learn from other nations' comprehensive sustainable tourism strategies. Ecotourism in Costa Rica stresses community engagement, environmental protection, and equitable benefit-sharing. Nepal's community-based tourism combines local culture and customs with ecological management. These examples show how tourism development should reflect local values. Bangladesh can build a robust, inclusive tourism economy that lasts by adopting comparable tactics (Liu et al., 2023).

Figure 3, a Stacked Bar Chart, shows how well the Government, Private Sector, and Local Communities achieved Sustainable Tourism Development Goals. The X-axis illustrates primary sustainability targets, while the Y-axis shows their percentage attainment (0% to 100%).

Three parts on each bar represent stakeholder contributions:

- **Government:** Public policies, legislation, and initiatives help achieve sustainability goals.
- **Private Sector:** Private firms and tourism operators invest, innovate, and practice sustainability.
- **Local Communities:** Emphasizes local communities' participation and cultural preservation in sustainable tourism development.

Sustainable tourism development requires holistic consideration of economic, environmental, cultural, and social factors. Bangladesh must use these methods to maximize its tourism business. Stakeholders may build a sustainable and equitable tourism landscape by merging

community participation, environmental stewardship, financial inclusion, cultural preservation, and good governance. This concept improves tourism experiences, strengthens local communities, maintains natural and cultural heritage, and benefits everyone long-term.

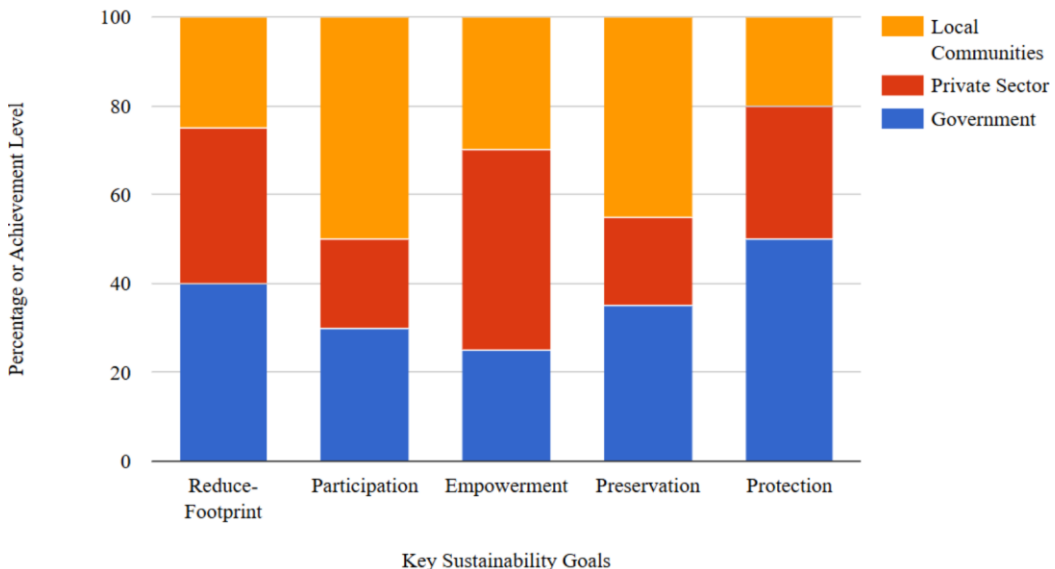


Figure 3: Sustainable Tourism Development Goals Achieved by Various Stakeholders

MAJOR FINDINGS

A holistic look at community participation in tourism management of Bangladesh indicates numerous key obstacles, possibilities, and methods for inclusive and sustainable tourism. Several significant conclusions from literature and policy research illuminate the country's tourism growth and the importance of community engagement in defining its future.

Limited Community Participation in Tourism Development: The lack of community participation in Bangladeshi tourism development is remarkable. Government or commercial sector entities typically run tourism projects without local engagement. Tourism may help regional development and alleviate poverty, but this discriminatory method hinders it. Some community-based tourism efforts exist, although they are tiny and rare.

Socioeconomic Inequities in Tourism Benefits: Unequal distribution of tourism's economic advantages is a significant impediment. Tourism of Bangladesh has boosted the economy in essential places like Dhaka and Cox's Bazar, while many rural and underprivileged people have seen little benefit or no benefit at all. Tourism benefits a few entrepreneurs and the commercial sector, while disadvantaged groups like women and indigenous people are sidelined. Failure to share economic advantages moderately increases inequities and decreases community buy-in for tourism development.

Environmental and Cultural Degradation from Unregulated Tourism: In environmentally fragile locations like the Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar, unregulated tourism has degraded the ecology and culture. Unsustainable tourism management methods include overexploitation of natural resources, waste buildup, and biodiversity loss due to inadequate policies and community engagement. Tourism development sometimes disregards local customs and values for economic gain, eroding cultural heritage. Local populations fight tourism growth because they suffer environmental harm without advantages.

Lack of Governance and Policy Coordination: Bangladesh's tourism sector's fragmented policies and inadequate governance are another vital conclusion. Many authorities with overlapping missions oversee tourism development, resulting in insufficient coordination and policy execution. The lack of a national tourism policy hinders sustainable and inclusive tourism. The lack of defined norms for community participation in tourism governance has also impacted local decision-making.

Potential for Inclusive and Community-Led Tourism: Despite the limitations, Bangladesh has excellent potential for community-led and inclusive tourism. The research shows that local communities may establish sustainable and culturally genuine tourism experiences with the right tools, resources, and assistance. Rural homestays and local artisan enterprises in Bangladesh demonstrate the benefits of community-based tourism planning and administration. In addition to improve the local economies, these programs support cultural and environmental preservation.

Need for Policy Reforms and Capacity Building: The research emphasizes comprehensive policy changes and capacity-building to increase community tourism management engagement. For inclusive tourism growth, policymakers must improve the government, train the workers, and encourage the local entrepreneurship. Tourism policy must also include environmental sustainability and cultural preservation, with community-based conservation activities as the foundation.

Importance of Public-Private-Community Partnerships (PPCPs): Finally, the findings stress the need for tourism development through Public-Private-Community Partnerships (PPCPs). Government, business, and community collaboration can reconcile economic interests and local wellbeing. PPCPs may help to create tourism models that empower communities and promote inclusive growth by balancing revenue with social and environmental responsibility.

This research shows the promise of community participation in tourism management of Bangladesh and the enormous impediments to its implementation. Bangladesh can establish a more inclusive and sustainable tourism business that benefits all stakeholders, including local populations, by tackling governance, policy fragmentation, economic disparities, and environmental sustainability. Tourism can improve Bangladesh by strengthening community engagement via capacity training, legislative reforms, and collaborative collaborations.

Inclusive Tourism Policy

An inclusive tourism policy can promote accessibility and equity by actively incorporating marginalized or excluded groups into the tourism framework. This emphasizes on the creation of equal opportunities for all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities, women, indigenous communities, and economically disadvantaged groups. Cultural sensitivity in design and delivery of tourism services and experiences can ensure the overall development which will respect the local traditions, values, as well as the identities of every national.

Bangladesh tourism can go beyond the level of economic benefits by adopting this policy. The policy can help Bangladesh to promote social justice, empower communities, and preserve cultural heritage. In the long run, it will contribute to a sustainable and holistic model of tourism development in Bangladesh.

Table 3 presents a comparison of effective inclusive tourism strategies adopted by different nations and highlights key lessons for Bangladesh. It illustrates how other countries have addressed inclusion in tourism and the outcomes they have achieved.

Table 3: Inclusive Tourism Policies across Countries

Country	Policy Name	Outcome	Lesson for Bangladesh
South Africa	Responsible Tourism Strategy	Improved local livelihoods	Promote equitable benefit-sharing
Costa Rica	Certification for Sustainable Tourism	Enhanced sustainability	Introduce certification systems
India	Rural Tourism Scheme	Empowered rural communities	Support community-based tourism

By examining how these policies address community participation, equitable benefit distribution, and environmental sustainability issues, policymakers, researchers, and tourism practitioners of Bangladesh can identify approaches that are both relevant and feasible for local implementation. This comparative analysis offers inspiration and practical guidance, enabling stakeholders to design and execute tourism initiatives that are inclusive, equitable, and sustainable, while effectively tackling the country's socio-economic and ecological challenges. Effective policy implementation, however, depends on strong political commitment, institutional support, and active stakeholder participation. By prioritizing inclusion, Bangladesh can harness tourism as a tool to promote the development, preserve the cultural heritage, and advance the social equity.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR INCLUSIVE TOURISM PRACTICES

Inclusive tourism practices are necessary to ensure tourism growth benefits all the stakeholders, especially those in disadvantaged and underserved areas. In Bangladesh, inclusive tourism promotes sustainable development, poverty reduction, and cultural preservation. Inclusivity requires strong policy frameworks that stress fairness, participation, and empowerment. This section discusses inclusive tourism policy in Bangladesh and offers ideas for implementation (Yang et al., 2023).

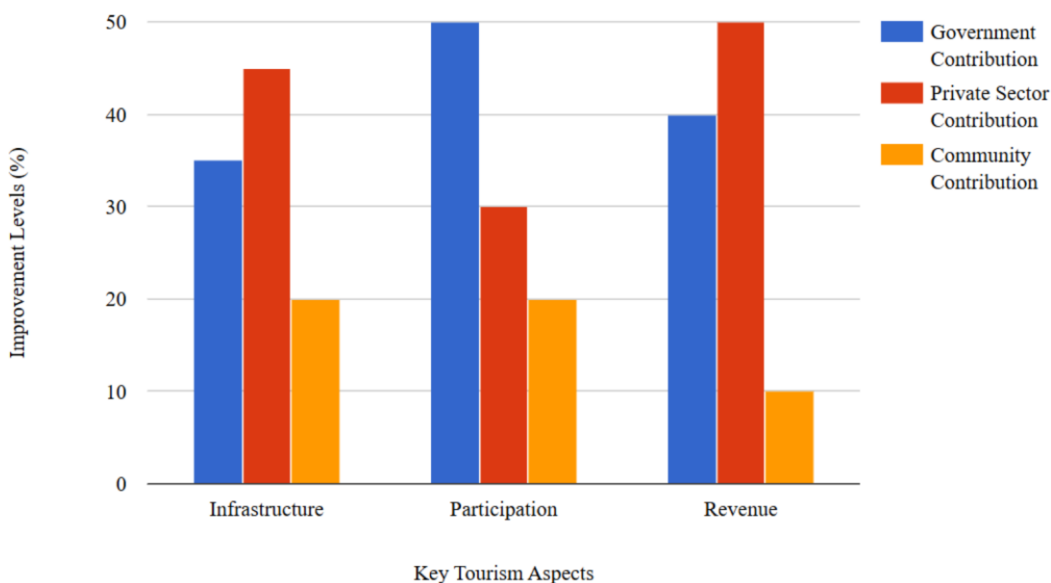


Figure 4: Impact of Inclusive Policies on Different Tourism Aspects

Figure 4 Triple Bar Graph shows how inclusive tourism policies affect infrastructure, participation, and revenue. The graph compares Government, Private Sector, and Community contributions to illustrate how inclusive policies have improved each area. The Y-axis shows percentage improvements in each tourism element, while the X-axis shows the assessed tourism aspects.

Three bars indicate each tourism aspect:

- **Government:** The bar shows the government's inclusion policy, financing, and infrastructure support.
- **Private Sector:** The private sector invests in tourism-enhancing services, training, and accessibility.
- **Community:** Inclusive tourism policies benefit local companies, employment, and cultural participation, which the bar shows.

Recognizing Communities as Key Stakeholders

Recognition of local people as tourism stakeholders is a key policy move. Inclusive tourism strategies must promote community interests and allow active participation in decision-making. Bangladesh creates participatory frameworks for community tourism planning, administration, and monitoring (Zheng et al., 2023).

Policy Recommendations

- Create local tourism councils or committees with varied community representation, such as women, youth, and indigenous people.
- Conduct community consultations for all tourism development initiatives to ensure local needs and values are respected.
- Integrate traditional knowledge and practices into tourism policy to enhance cultural authenticity and sustainability.

Promoting Equitable Economic Opportunities

Inclusive tourism strategies must address socioeconomic differences by providing equal income and employment. This involves encouraging women, rural, and indigenous Bangladeshis to participate in tourism.

Policy Recommendations

- Provide targeted training and capacity-building programs for underrepresented communities to learn tourism management, hospitality, and entrepreneurship.
- Help small-scale tourism businesses like homestays, handicraft manufacture, and community-guided tourism get financing.
- Offer tax incentives or subsidies to tourism enterprises that employ local staff and provide fair wages.

Strengthening Governance and Policy Coordination

Inclusive tourism requires good governance. In Bangladesh, fragmented policies and poor stakeholder collaboration hamper inclusive programs. A consistent and transparent governance system must promote inclusion across tourism development (Jo, 2023).

Policy Recommendations

- Create a national tourism policy prioritizing inclusion as a fundamental value.

- Improve collaboration between tourism, environment, and culture ministry to match goals and expedite policy execution.
- Establish monitoring and evaluation procedures to examine tourism initiatives' effects on community wellbeing and inclusion.

Fostering Environmental and Cultural Sustainability

Holistic approach to community engagement in tourism or inclusive tourism must incorporate environmental and cultural sustainability to help communities in the long term. Policies should promote ecotourism, cultural heritage preservation, and natural resource conservation.

Policy Recommendations

- Regulate the over-tourism and effectively manage the tourism capacity of environmentally fragile regions like the Sundarbans and Cox's Bazar.
- Encourage the local communities to conserve biodiversity and safeguard natural environments.
- Allocate funds to restore the heritage sites, document the traditional crafts systematically, and support the cultural events.

Enhancing Accessibility and Inclusivity for Diverse Groups

Holistic approach to community engagement in tourism or inclusive tourism calls for policies to make tourism accessible to all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. This involves removing physical, financial, and social barriers to tourism for underprivileged communities (Krabokoukis & Polyzos, 2023).

Policy Recommendations

- Improve infrastructure for disabled persons, including wheelchair-friendly routes, ramps, and signs.
- Encourage fair tourism access, offer subsidies or reduced admission prices for low-income groups.
- Offer bilingual guides and promote diversity in marketing efforts.

Leveraging Technology for Inclusive Tourism

Digital tools and technology enable the tourism inclusion. Policies should support the technology usage to improve underserved community access, exposure, and involvement.

Policy Recommendations

- Promote community-based tourism projects like local homestays and cultural experiences through Internet platforms.
- Teach local entrepreneurs and craftspeople digital marketing.
- Utilize data analytics and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to identify gaps in tourism development and prepare targeted actions.

Encouraging PPCPs

The government, the commercial sector, and local communities must collaborate for inclusive tourism. PPCPs should be encouraged to leverage resources, knowledge, and innovation.

Policy Recommendations

- Encourage private sector investments that promote community development and diversity.

- Establish stakeholder discussion and cooperation platforms to align goals and exchange best practices.
- Promote collaboration with international organizations and NGOs to enhance knowledge sharing and capacity growth.

Bangladesh needs a multifaceted policy to promote inclusive tourism. Policymakers may develop a tourism framework that recognizes communities as essential stakeholders, fosters fair economic possibilities, enhances governance, and incorporates sustainability principles. Technology and collaborations may boost inclusion efforts.

LIMITATIONS

Notwithstanding the insights this study has offered, several limitations must be noted. First, the dependence on secondary data and literature limited the amount of empirical information and firsthand accounts that may provide a more complex understanding of community participation in tourism management. Furthermore, the results may not adequately reflect the particular difficulties encountered by specific areas or people because they are predicated on a general assessment of tourism in Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes a comprehensive strategy that balances economic, social, cultural, and environmental factors, underscoring the critical role that community participation plays in tourism management. Although tourism has much potential to promote sustainable development in Bangladesh, the advantages are frequently not shared fairly, and the community is rarely involved in decision-making. According to the findings, tourism expansion risks escalating social injustices, environmental damage, and cultural loss without actual community involvement.

Adopting policies encouraging community empowerment, advancing equal economic opportunities, and protecting cultural and environmental heritage is crucial for Bangladesh to promote inclusive and sustainable tourism. When given the proper backing, community-led tourism projects have demonstrated potential in fostering environmental preservation, conserving customs, and creating local revenue. Current governance issues, policy fragmentation, and insufficient stakeholder collaboration must be resolved to achieve these results.

The research emphasizes the significance of bolstering PPCPs and funding capacity-building initiatives to empower local communities for participating actively in tourism management. Furthermore, developing a tourism industry that serves all facets of society requires a national tourism strategy that places sustainability and inclusion at its center.

In conclusion, Bangladesh can realize the full potential of its tourism sector and ensure that it supports economic growth and the empowerment and wellbeing of its local people by removing the obstacles to community engagement and promoting inclusive government. Holistic approaches to tourism development are essential to creating a resilient, sustainable, and equitable tourism environment in Bangladesh.

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How to cite this article

Farhan, K. A., & Mohiuddin, M. (2026). Community Engagement in Tourism Management: A Holistic Perspective from Bangladesh. *Global Disclosure of Economics and Business*, 15(1), 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.18034/gdeb.v15i1.799>