

# Community Based Tourism Activities within the Context of Sustainability of Tourism: A Case of Gelemiş Village

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## Abstract

Increasing awareness about reducing negative effects of tourism activities on environment and handing down a liveable world to the next generations have enabled the rapid development of nature based tourism activities for the last 20-25 years. Although protection of environment is very essential within the context of tourism sustainability, support and active participation of locals living in the areas where the tourism activities performed is also needed for achieving desired goals in sustainability. At this point Community Based Tourism (CBT) activities aiming to create more sustainable tourism industry draw attention through focusing on tourism development and enabling sustainability with destination communities. CBT activities play a significant role due to its particular importance on locals' ownership at tourism activities, enabling socio-cultural and economic development and protection of environment as well.

CBT activities that have rapidly increased in countries like Canada, Nepal and Malaysia is also becoming widespread in Turkey. However much more sectoral and academic studies are needed to increase its growing rate. In this study, it is aimed to search current situation of CBT activities in Gelemiş Municipality of Antalya. Within this context, 15 semi-structured interviews have been conducted with local tourism entrepreneurs and some statistics have been obtained from Gelemiş headman. Data gathered from interviews has been evaluated under six categories such as rudiments of tourism sector, active participation in CBT initiatives, investment situation, local employment and local assets usage, government incentives, awareness of local community. Results of the study, clearly show that active participation in CBT management should be enhanced and increased, also the quantity of government incentives and supports should be increased, and a master tourism plan must be prepared that considers short-medium and long term CBT development strategies.

**Keywords:** Sustainability in Tourism, Community Based Tourism, Local Entrepreneurship.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Economies with low-productivity namely undeveloped economies, are generally characterized with poor local competition. However, developed economies primarily requires strong local competition. Today, successful companies in the global competition are in intense competition in terms of continuous development and innovation with their local competitors. For developed economies, there is a need for policies aimed at raising production efficiency from low-cost raw materials to low total costs and improvements in service delivery. Within this context, economic system should transform from imitation to innovation and from microscale investments to macroscale investments. In this process, it is necessary to have non-physical assets as well as physical ones. In low-productivity economies, the focus is largely on foreign markets. The presence of customers in internal markets will put pressure on improving the firm's processes. Demand arising from local customers can also reveal market segments where firms can differentiate themselves. In a global economy, the nature of local demand and its associated industry clusters are critical to achieving demand-side advantages. At this point, the level of local consciousness can be increased in order to turn demand conditions into advantage. Thus, it may become more possible to gain global competitiveness (Porter, 1998: 120-124).

When the issue is addressed in terms of tourism, it can be said that the tourism industry is generally considered as a locomotive for developing country economies and needs side elements and activities

that will enable socio-economic, environmental and cultural development. Also, CBT initiatives are at the forefront of these side elements since those initiatives make welfare-oriented and environment-friendly development possible through tourism activities. One of the most important characteristics of CBT initiatives is that the benefit obtained through tourism activities directly contributes to the local economy. These initiatives not only provide economic contribution to the region, but also allow natural, historical and cultural heritage to be protected from the first hand. Indeed, local people who spent a large part of his/her life in the area as the user of local assets have a great responsibility for ensuring sustainability in tourism. It is possible to say that individuals who participate in CBT activities and thus have a say in preserving and handing down these values to future generations will protect touristic values with a greater sense of responsibility, as well as obtaining benefits from these touristic values. More local people who benefit from tourism mean more individuals with responsibility for protecting the environmental elements that attract tourists (Dasmann et. al., 1973: 115). The main doctrine in tourism's regional development and planning is the necessity of protecting the biophysical environment in tourism areas. This necessity can be ensured by the inclusion of local people directly in environmental protection or the further development of these activities in this area, or indirectly by creating local funds to protect environmental values (Dowling, 2002: 214).

CBT which provides sustainability in tourism with the initiatives of individuals who adopt sustainable usage of the nature at first hand, requires equal sharing and organization of the benefits obtained through tourism activities to all members of the community. In other words, the provision of this organization requires that all stakeholders in the region be brought together around common goals. The presence of local initiatives that will directly contribute to the tourism supply is also important in terms of increasing tourism awareness and ownership in the region. This study deals with the effects of CBT applications, which are important in terms of protection of natural, historical and cultural structure, formation of local entrepreneurship consciousness and transformation of local assets into economic contribution. And, the main purpose of this study is to determine the situation of Gelemiş Village (Patara Village) within the scope of CBT initiatives and to establish CBT development model for the village. Within this context, primarily a conceptual framework about CBT applications is given. In the ongoing process the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with the stakeholders who have a say on CBT initiatives are given, and then some evaluations and suggestions are made.

## **2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1. Community Based Tourism Activities**

**CBT which** is generally considered as a means of socio-economic and environmental development by offering tourism products (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009: 4; **Vanagas and Jagminas**, 2011: 157) is an effective way of enabling sustainability in tourism (Blackstock, 2005: 39). Within this perspective World Wildlife Fund (WWF) describes CBT as a form of ecotourism and define it *where the local community has substantial control over, and involvement in, its development and management, and a major proportion of the benefits remain within the community* (Denman, 2001: 2). CBT has emerged as a possible solution to the negative effects of mass tourism (López-Guzmán, Borges & Hernandez-Merino, 2013: 131). The emergence of CBT can be placed in the context of two developments: one, recent worldwide activities that promote sustainable and responsible forms of tourism; and two, the emergence of alternative approaches to protected area management and conservation efforts that link biodiversity conservation with local community development (Hiwasaki, 2006: 677).

CBT activities aim a tourism development which consider the needs and benefits of local community. Thus, CBT requires steady institutions designed to enhance local participation and promote the economic, social, and cultural well-being of locals. Within this period, CBT development strategy should be compatible with other tourism activities and other components of local economy (Brohman, 1996: 60). Despite this, it is noteworthy that CBT cannot solve all development problems in poor communities, but provides an additional strategy through which communities can diversify their livelihoods (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2013: 4). Four dimensions are critical at CBT activities in order

to achieve sustainability; CBT incomes should exceed costs, CBT activities should be ecologically sustainable, cost and benefits should be equally distributed among all participants in the activity, and an appropriate organization should be ensured. Additionally this organization should be established to represent the interests of all community members and to reflect true ownership (Rozemeijer, 2001: 13; Salazar, 2012: 11). By considering four dimension, a well-structured small-scale CBT empower local communities, local community recognize the importance of natural resources and control over their development, and they equally share costs and benefits. Furthermore such CBT initiatives could provide an important complement and counterbalance to the mass tourism (Kibicho, 2008: 227). Within this scope a well-structured and successful CBT initiative should have some characteristics listed below (Goodwin and Santilli, 2009: 23);

- **Benefits** going to individuals or households in the community
- Collective benefits – creation of assets which are used by the community as a whole, roads, schools, clinics etc.
- **Community** benefits where there is a distribution of benefit to all households in the community
- **Conservation** initiatives with community and collective benefits
- **Joint** ventures with community and/or collective benefits, including an anticipated transfer of management
- **Community** owned and managed enterprises (CBEs)
- **Private** sector enterprises with community benefits
- **Product** networks developed for marketing tourism in a local area
- **Community** enterprise within a broader co-operative
- **Private** sector development within a community owned reserve.

One other issue in CBT is the community participation to initiatives. Because CBT primarily promotes community participation and seeks to deliver wider community benefits (Mgonja et.al, 2015: 378). To ensure maximum community participation, the community should be well informed and educated about its trust. The CBT management should be transparent and accountable in its dealings. And, the dialogue between different stakeholders should be encouraged and facilitated (Stone and Stone, 2011: 112). Moreover to enhance the efficiency of local community participation local, regional and national networks should be established. Those networks reinforce the bonding relations inside the community, facilitate development process, and enable to gain important relations and connections with the outside world (Iorio and Corsale, 2014: 48-49).

Considering community participation and networks a successful CBT development requires coordinated joint ventures which are consisted of governmental, non-governmental and private entities. Different CBT development strategies are possible within this context. Those entities (particularly private ones) could be a single community owned or they could be micro-small enterprises under a common organization leading CBT initiatives for the sake of them. No matter which strategy is implemented, different CBT actors are linked with others within the context of community benefits. The participation of community members in the various activities should all be linked to the CBT for the purposes of coordination and for cooperating in the CBT ventures (Mtapuri and Giampiccoli, 2013: 7-9).

## 2.2. Study Area: Gelemiş Village (Patara)

Gelemiş Village generally called as ***Patara***, is **situated in** the southern west of Turkey **near by Fethiye** and Kaş. The Roman historian Livius identified Patara as "the Centre of the Lycian League" (Kaş Kaymakamlığı, 2017). The city also hosts the first parliament building of the world, the oldest lighthouse and the birth place of St. Nicholas (Patara Golden Pansiyon, 2017). The city is popular with Patara ancient city which is one the oldest and important cities of Lykia, Patara Beach, sand dunes, traditional life and its nature (Antalya Müzesi, 2017).

Firstly mentioned by Herodotus, Patara ancient city is 41 km. from Kaş and the city dates back to 4th-5th century BC. **Ancient Patara** city and seaport are at the entrance of Ovagelemiş Valley. However, the Patara port filled with the alluviums brought by Xhantos (Eşen) Stream. Patara Beach hosting Patara ancient city has the longest strand of Turkey with a length of 18 km and declared as “specially protected environment area” by Ministry of Environment. The beach is also spawning area of Caretta Caretta sea turtles. There are many small-scale accommodation lodges, souvenir shops and restaurants where local dishes are served (Cengiz, Çobanoğlu and Barut, 2012: 348).

In addition to its historical and natural beauties Patara (Gelemiş Village) is an important place for CBT activities. It is known that there are many countryside garden restaurants serving traditional foods, and some pancake restaurants with yoruk tent decoration. Moreover most of the accommodation lodges are small-scale and generally operated as pension or boutique hotel. Above all, most of these tourism enterprises owned by local community. Therefore, local community has a control on tourism activities, which is one of the most important criteria for CBT. Therefore it is assumed that Gelemiş Village could be a leading destination in terms of CBT development.

### **3. STUDY METHOD**

This study primarily aims to determine current position of Gelemiş Village in the context of CBT initiatives in detail and then to present a CBT development model considering different actors representing local community. Thus, secondary data analysis and semi-structured interviews were conducted. Secondary data analysis were mainly consisted of CBT literature review and collection of general information about Gelemiş (location, geography, population, numbers of tourism enterprises and etc.). And, interviews were conducted to get necessary data and information about Gelemiş tourism, CBT potential, ownership of enterprises, employment strategy, and percentage of local entrepreneurs, and so on. In this scope 15 **interviews were** made with different employers/proprietors involving accommodation lodges, restaurants, souvenir shops, and cafeterias. And data were gathered by face to face meetings from 15 July to 25 July, and then transcription has made.

In the analysis process, interview forms were read by researchers and two consultant in an effort to determine key themes of the study. This process basically involves open and blind coding which provides key words as well. Then research data were reviewed and reported in accordance with predetermined themes and key words. Finally, all components were brought together to set a model for CBT development in Patara including some practical and managerial suggestions.

### **4. FINDINGS and DISCUSSION**

In this part of the study, the findings and evaluations obtained as a result of face-to-face interviews with relevant employers/proprietors were included. The data gathered by interviews from different employers/proprietors involving accommodation lodges, restaurants, souvenir shops, and cafeterias. Based on the data obtained from interviews, survey results were evaluated in 6 different categories.

#### ***Rudiments about Patara tourism sector***

In regards to data obtained from Gelemiş Village headman, there are 30 pension, 1 hotel (municipality certified), 4 travel agencies, 10 restaurants, 6 pancake house, 5 cafeterias and 6 souvenir shops in Patara. In the region, most of the accommodation lodges are small-scaled such as pensions, and almost all of them serve traditional Turkish breakfast including local crops and goods such as tomato, olives, olive oil, jam, honey and etc.). Pancake houses are an important part of tourism supply as a local cuisine. Investments in the region mainly belong to local people. There is only one non-local resident investor in the region who is the owner of a 3 star hotel. All other investors including pensions, restaurants, pancake houses, souvenir shops are natives/locals of the region. Likewise, the vast majority of the employees working these enterprises are local. Particularly, local employment rates increase to 90% in restaurants and pancake houses.

Contrary to this cultural and social richness for CBT, there is not a tourism master plan for the region. Moreover, government incentives to tourism development are minute amount. There is only one association about tourism development, marketing and planning named as Patara Culture and Tourism Association which is being managed by locals.

### ***Evaluations on active participation in CBT management***

Participants of the study generally state that they don't have a voice about Patara's future, and official authorities do not care about their opinions and suggestions in terms of tourism development in Patara. Also they cannot get sufficient support or any incentives from stakeholders such as Municipality, Sub-Governor's Office and Governor's Office. They are welcoming non-local resident investors, unless the number of them is too much. To avoid of costssuch as lodging, local employment is more preferred in the area.

CBT initiatives whose main focal point is public welfare and development necessitate all stakeholders in the region to act in common mind and cooperation. This common mind and cooperation will increase the number of individuals embracing protection of nature and then using (sustainability) principle, and also will provide equal distribution of the benefits among all stakeholders. Moreover any cooperation will primarily contribute to sustainability in tourism. Within this perspective, participants lay emphasis on participation by stating that they want to have more voice in future of the area. According to them, authorities should care about their opinions and suggestions. Some of their statements about this issue are; *"Our opinions and suggestions are not implemented as long as only authorities have a voice in Patara's tourism", "even if they listen our suggestions they do not carry out them", meetings about tourism development were held before, but not anymore", "we annually attend to international tourism fairs as an association, but we need to have more say in the area as the local investors/work force"*.

### ***Evaluations on investments***

CBT projects are essential in terms of realizing Patara's tourism potential with local initiatives. Local people contribute to the tourism sustainability and also for their own benefit by transforming local resources into touristic values. Additionally, to have a say in initiatives of the community is very essential in terms of providing more social utility. Participants of the study have stated that they are welcoming non-local resident investors unless the number of them is too much by expressing *"We are certainly disposed to new investors, since the quantity of them is very less. Local people do not own the area", "Of course, why not? How will the region develop if there is no investor?"* Findings related to the subject are partially paralleled by the characteristics of CBT. It is clear that local people voluntarily admit initiatives in terms of public utility. On the other hand, is important to act more consciously in this regard. To provide active participation of local communities, local people should be more informed and educated about the benefits of CBT initiatives to the region.

### ***Local employment and evaluations on the local assets usage***

Another important issue in terms of public utility is employment opportunities arising from CBT initiatives. CBT initiatives which are also pioneering socio-cultural development and regional development contribute to the local employment. Hence, participants state that they prefer local people to employ, because of the costs such as lodging. For instance they express *"We employ local people due to the accommodation and transportation facilities", "Running local people is cost-efficient for us, because we get rid of accommodation costs."* One of the important issues in transforming local resources into tourist attractions is the use of locally grown products in the food and beverage services offered. For the tourists, natural and organic nutrition is one of the most important aspects of touristic experiences. Within this context, participants state that they use local crops (vegetables and fruits), and other goods/products such as milk, dairy products, honey, olives. Some statements about using local goods/products are *"Especially we use our own products such as olives, olive oil, tomato and cucumber)", "All needed goods and products are grown or naturally exist here, and, we predominantly use our own products/goods", "we sometimes certainly buy something to serve, but substantially local crops are used."*

### ***Evaluations on government incentives and supports***

The development of community-based tourism and the involvement of local communities in these activities depends on the successful management of relevant stakeholders. Within this context local administrations, public and private enterprises should act in the same common denominator. Hence, material aid and spiritual support of local administrators could contribute to increase tourism awareness in the region. Contrary to this fact, participants state that local authorities such as Municipality, Sub-Governor's Office and Governor's Office do not support initiatives adequately. Some opinions of participants on the subject are as follows "*We do not get any support. We will almost do the spraying by ourselves*", "*Supports vary on demand. But most of our requests are not considered by the authorities*"

### ***Awareness of local community about CBT***

In the study, the opinions of the participants were also consulted as to determine who make more use of touristic activities, degree of the awareness of local people about the usage of local resources as touristic value, and marketing efforts about the region. The results reveal that about half of those benefit from touristic activities in the region are the locals. Nearly half of the participants have stated that local community is aware of using cultural assets for tourism purposes, and they emphasize the existence of nongovernmental organizations such as "Patara Culture and Tourism Association" controlled and managed by locals. The percentage of those who think that cultural values are accurately determined and planned studies are done for this, is less than half. Raising awareness of local people about the usage of touristic assets primarily requires an accurate inventory conduction about cultural assets and determining the demand generating potential of each asset. More than half of the participants state that the touristic values on the spot are determined together with the local people. However, some participants criticize this process since the potential negativities and threats cannot be foreseen. Additionally local people have no say in the preparation of marketing budget, as well as, there is not any separate marketing strategy driven for each touristic value.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Today, with the gaining importance of alternative tourism activities to mass tourism, CBT initiatives have begun to be considered as a means of rural development in terms of differentiated marketing and sustainability. Within this perspective, especially undeveloped or developing regions that have tourism attractions for CBT could rapidly gain socio-economic success via CBT as long as they protect their nature, cuisine and traditions. However, this process should be maintained by local people where they have certain control over the activities. Hence, CBT income could provide added value to the region and it could be equally distributed among locals. So, CBT is one of the most important types of tourism activities that contribute to sustainability. From this point of view, this study has aimed to evaluate CBT in Gelemiş Village and presents a CBT development model to the region.

Results of the study clearly indicate that Gelemiş village known as Patara have some advantages in terms of CBT. Protected nature of the region, small- scaled tourism enterprises serving traditional foods, pancake houses as a distinctive feature, awareness about tourism's impacts, high-degree local ownership and high-degree local employment. However, there are some disadvantages to CBT such as absence of a tourism master plan that should be particularly prepared for Patara, inadequate government support and incentives, absence of tourism associations and non-governmental organizations managed by locals, partially ineffective marketing efforts.

With its pros and cons, Patara village has a great potential in terms of CBT development. Nevertheless, relevant development could be enhanced via holistic evaluations and strategic planning supported by destination development strategies. Determining the main steps for strategic planning may be useful for further intentions to enhance development process. So, a sample development model built by authors is given below consisting main steps for CBT development.

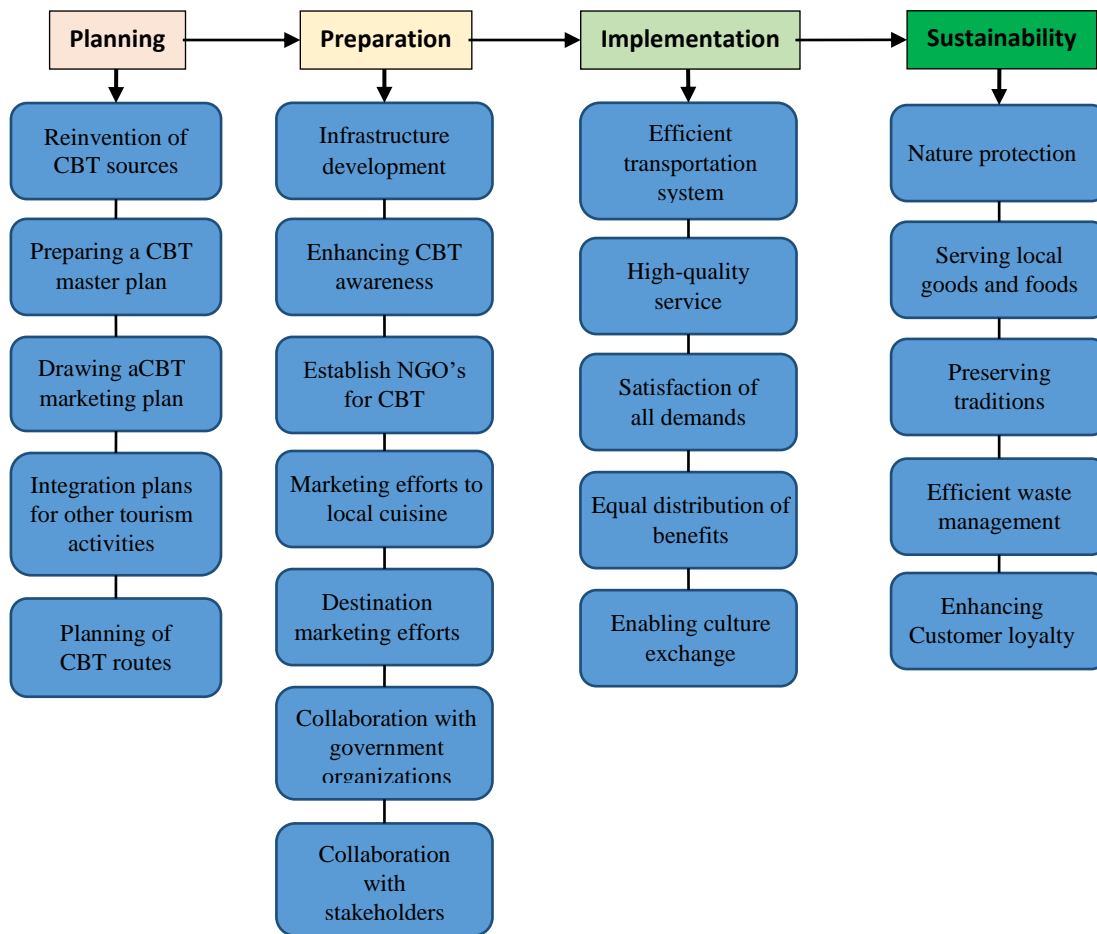


Figure 1: Sample CBT development model for Patara

As seen in figure 1, we propose a four step CBT development process involving sub-steps that are linked to each other in terms of holistic evaluation. To develop CBT, firstly, reinvention process of CBT resources and master planning about CBT should be performed simultaneously. Also, local authorities should draw a marketing plan addressing directly to CBT promotion, with the participation of local investors and other locals. As it is well known, focusing only CBT activities may cause a narrow-range tourism activity plan. Thus, other tourism attractions of the region should be integrated with CBT activities in terms of product diversification. Local authorities who have a say in CBT development should determine prior CBT activities that will lead CBT in the region. And then, by determining other CBT activities, a variety of CBT routes should be settled. CBT planning process should be followed by preparation phase. Preparation phase mainly should target to establish a well-designed and promoted destination to enhance its attractiveness. So, to create an effective CBT demand, infrastructure and superstructure problems of the destination should already be solved. One other issue on preparation process is to create CBT awareness. Some education programs or mini conferences could be held within this scope. Meanwhile Patara village should market under CBT brand in collaboration with stake holders and other governmental/nongovernmental organizations.

A CBT destination development strategy also depends on adequate, qualified and prompt service of local attractions. Thus, locals as the authorities of CBT should provide an efficient and comfortable transportation system to Patara. Further all services offered to customers should be high-quality involving mainly local goods and foods made from local crops. Tourists are also should easily get in contact with the employees, employers and locals in terms of culture learning. So, workforce and locals of the region must speak at least one foreign language fluently.

Relevant literature and current applications about CBT particularly stress on sustainability of activities. From this point of view, owners of the tourism enterprises that operate in Patara must make an effort to use recycling materials during service production. Also, green energy usage should be enhanced in the village. Local authorities should implement an extensive and efficient waste-management program in the village. Besides, to sustain CBT activities for the next generations, traditions and customs of the locals must be learned by raising generation. Both adults and young generation should be enthusiastic about protection of traditions and transferring them to next generations. In sum, to market Patara as a CBT destination a multi-dimensional and holistic approach must be implemented. And this approach must consider all factors that have direct or indirect effects on sustainability and CBT of Patara.

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