

LOCAL COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE OF TOURISM IN WORLD HERITAGE
SITES, CASE STUDY OF GALLE FORT, SRI LANKA

RANGA DAYAN SOYSA

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Science (Tourism Planning)

Faculty of Built Environment
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to my dear son, Adithya

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Knowledge is a collaborative process throughout generations. I would like to express my humble appreciation for those who have devoted their life for the production of knowledge.

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ABSTRACT

Local community participation is essential in order to archive sustainable measures in tourism development. Local community as a nucleus of destination, they must incorporate actively in tourism planning as well as beneficiaries of local enterprisers. That cannot archive without an agreed vision of related stakeholders and agreed vision must reflect the triple bottom line guiding principles together with comprehensive stakeholder management plan. Success of local community involvement is a result of their decisions represent by interests and perspectives. This study is focus on local community perspective towards tourism and pertaining issues relate to their support in destination development. Galle fort is one the key tourism destinations in Sri Lanka, which has been declared as a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1988. The main attraction of Galle fort is its colonial architectural heritage depicts more than five hundred years of history. Local community of Galle fort undergone several issues relating to unplanned tourism development as well as strict regulations imposed by heritage conservation authorities. Literature review suggests that community attachment positively influence their participation while it's indirectly influence by environmental attitude. Research study carried through quantitative approach involving 253 respondents representing among five neighborhoods of Galle fort. The outcome of the research suggests recommendations for comprehensive stakeholder management plan in order to archive sustainable measures in tourism destinations of world heritage sites.

ABSTRAK

Penglibatan masyarakat tempatan adalah penting dalam mencapai ukuran mampan dalam pembangunan pelancongan. Masyarakat tempatan merupakan aktor utama dalam setiap destinasi di mana penglibatan secara aktif adalah penting dalam perancangan pelanconga selain mendapat manfaat daripada pengusaha tempatan. Kejayaan sesuatu visi tidak boleh dicapai tanpa kata sepakat agensi berkaitan dan visi harus mencerminkan prinsip *triple bottom line* selaras dengan pelan pengurusan komprehensif pihak berkepentingan. Kejayaan penglibatan masyarakat tempatan merupakan hasil daripada penglibatan aktif dalam membuat keputusan berasaskan minat dan pandangan individu. Fokus kajian ini adalah pandangan masyarakat tempatan terhadap pelancongan dan isu yang berkaitan dengan pembangunan destinasi pelancongan. Galle Fort merupakan salah satu destinasi pelancongan di Sri Lanka dan telah diwartakan sebagai tapak warisan dunia oleh UNESCO pada tahun 1988. Tarikan utama Galle Fort ialah senibina kolonial yang berusia lebih 500 tahun berdasarkan sejarahnya. Masyarakat setempat di Galle Fort mengalami masalah pelancongan tidak terancang selain undang-undang yang ketat oleh pihak berkuasa pemuliharaan warisan. Kajian literature mencadangkan agar masyarakat setempat terlibat secara positif selain penglibatan secara tidak langsung yang dipengaruhi oleh persekitaran. Kajian dilakukan dengan menggunakan teknik kuantitatif yang melibatkan 253 responden di 5 kawasan Galle Fort. Hasil akhir kajian ialah cadangan pelan pembangunan komprehensif dalam mencapai ukuran mampan dalam destinasi pelancongan tapak warisan dunia.

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CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Community participation is one of the important factors in achieving sustainable tourism in destinations. The concept of sustainable tourism development has gained attention in order to provide holistic remuneration to its destination. The concept of sustainable tourism development has been largely summarized to encompass three components, economic, environment and social (Butler 1999, Swarbrooke 1999). As previously mentioned, community involvement is considered to be the cornerstone of the sustainable tourism since they indirectly affect the behavior of residents towards tourism. The concept of community participation in decision making has been utilized in town and country planning decades before its advent in tourism (Swarbrooke 1999).

Community perceptions towards tourism are an important factor since community as the nucleus for decision making and support for tourism in destinations. Most of the studies related to local community attitudes and perceptions are based on assumptions which are merely supporting towards tourism development. But this approach has to re-concern in the context of protected areas as due to imposed regulations by authorities in order to preserve heritage values. In the context of protected area, local communities have gone for two major impacts in their daily lives, tourism development as a dynamic factor and imposed regulations due to protected laws of given area. The definition of such communities given as, a heterogeneous group who share residence in the same geographic area and access a set of local natural resources (Drumm and Moore 2005). They have been largely marginalized or excluded from the opportunities of tourism development.

The selected case study of this research is Galle Fort; top three destinations of Sri Lanka tourism. The destination is famous for its Dutch heritage architecture and especially as a living fort. The fort has been founded in 16th century by Portuguese and reached its highest development during the period of Dutch during 18th century. The fort has been listed as UNESCO world heritage in 1988 under the citation IV of outstanding universal value. Currently the fort has taken attention as a tourist destination from both local and foreign visitors and adversely affected to its sustainability due to unplanned tourism development. Meanwhile, the strict regulations were imposed to protect built environment of the fort are concurrently effected to daily life of neighborhood communities.

1.1 Background of the Problem

Since 1990 Galle fort instigated as a tourism destination in Sri Lanka without any proper planning strategies. Locals used to visit Galle fort for educational and recreational purposes and only handful of foreigners, who aware of architectural heritage. In 1969 Galle fort is declared as an archeological reserve by United Nations and in 1988 UNESCO declared it as world heritage site. Thereafter numerous organizations began to converse about the significance of Galle fort and it magnetized more foreign tourists than ever before. Buildings were changed into boutique hotels and restaurants, gallery shops appeared without proper regulations. In 1994 government of Sri Lanka established Galle Heritage Foundation (GHF) in order to preserve its heritage management for future generation. The objective of GHF is to act as a unified body to take responsibility and actions on behalf of represented stakeholders. Tourism and its related actions were beyond the control of GHF's scope and objectives and thus questioning its overall effectiveness as a managing body of Galle fort.

Currently, excessive number of tourists are visiting Galle fort annually without proper visitor management plan. Galle fort has not been equipped with mechanism to control tourist visits since the area is known as common public space and anyone has a right to visit. Local communities will not benefit from the tourist visits unless if they have any direct involvement into tourism services like providing accommodation, food etc. Local communities adversely affected by tourist behavior and traffic cause by external visits. Absence of the involvement of local communities in GHF has created a miscommunication about tourism planning and GHF objectives. The involvement of local community residents in the management of the world heritage site can foster respect an understating of the need to protect the natural landscape as well as the need to integrate tourism into the local economy (Wage 1995).

UNESCO has imposed excessive amount of regulations in order to protect its outstanding universal value of its' building heritage. Residents are facing enormous pressure in maintaining their houses without proper income basis. In the mid of 1990s gentrification of Galle fort commenced following with the economic policies by government. Most of the houses were sold out to foreigners because of severe regulations and effect of gentrification and resulted to affect to livability of local communities.

1.2 Purpose of Study

The proposed study is focus on the current issues concurrent by local communities due to the affect of tourism and the regulations imposed by UNESCO in order to maintain world heritage standards at Galle fort. Tourism in world heritage sites does not expect to exhibit buildings or archeological elements but also experience intangible heritage as well. According to Wage, the importance of incorporating intangible heritage with tourism development stated as, increasing interest by tourists in learning about and experiencing different cultures has also leverage for the involvement of local communities in protected area managing (Wage 1995).

Research also covers the evaluation on local community perspective towards sustainable tourism development based on indicators such as community attachment, environmental attitude, level of involvement, perspective of DMO and support for sustainable tourism development as well.

Besides, study also focuses on hindrance and facilitating issues relating to referred indicators of community participation in order to improve sustainable tourism development in destination while safeguarding world heritage standards.

1.3 Statement of Research

1.3.1 Research Question

There are two research questions were identified during the formulating of study as follows;

1. What is the local community perception towards tourism in world heritage sites?
2. How to increase local community participation on tourism development in world heritage sites?

1.2.2 Research Aim and Objective

Main aim of this research is to identify the local community perspective of tourism and how would their rejoin in supporting tourism development. The study will follow by investigation of issues relating to stakeholder management plan.

1. To determine the issues relating to local community perspective towards tourism in world heritage sites.
2. To find out hindrance and facilitating issues that would increase the level of local community participation in sustainable tourism development.

1.3.3 Expected Findings

The research will base on primary data taken via interviews from local communities of world heritage site. There are few in-depth interviews from representatives related to Galle fort tourism activities as well as Galle fort heritage foundation. Expected findings are as follows;

1. Indentify neighborhood perspective on sustainable tourism in Galle fort.
2. The motivational factors which influence neighborhood communities to participate or depart from tourism activities.
3. Issues relating to destinations with reference local community with regard to tourism development of world heritage sites.

1.4 Importance of Study

The research is based on finding issues relating to local community participation of tourism in world heritage sites especially focusing on stakeholder management. The study will contribute to development of collaborative management plan in order to achieve sustainable tourism development which will benefit the local communities of protected world heritage sites. This study will confront Destination Management Organization (DMO) to re-concern their role in heritage management in order to achieve sustainable tourism development.

Tourism development is facing difficulties in gaining support from local communities and final outcome of the study will ensure destinations to prepare management structure which leads to more benefits such as economic growth, socio-cultural development and protection of heritage.

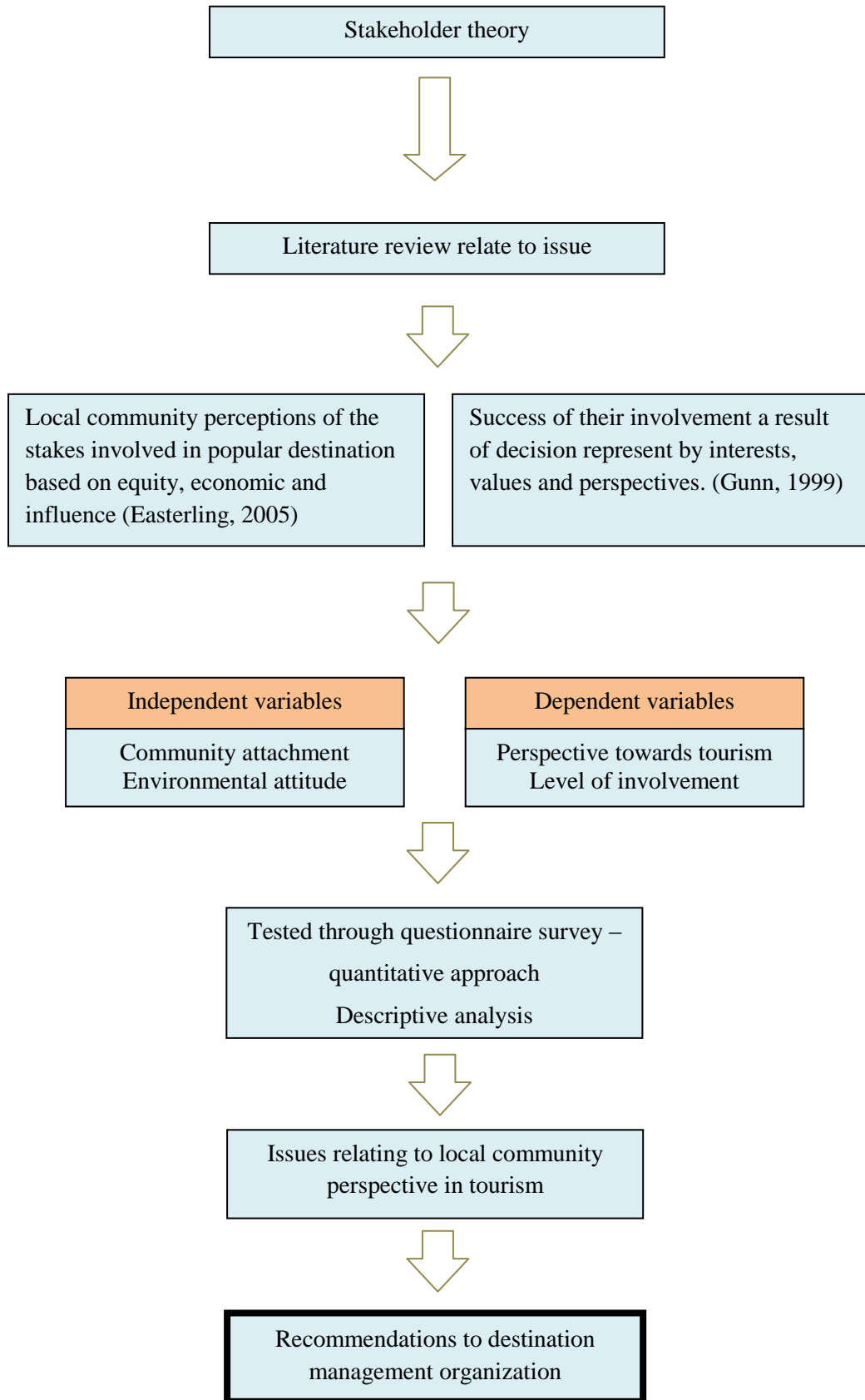


Fig 1.1: Conceptual Framework

1.5 Scope of the Study

The research will formulate towards the following scope to fulfill the aims and objectives.

1. Understand the stakeholder theory and its relationship with sustainable tourism.
2. Identify local community interest during the participation of tourism development. Also study will focus on the issues relating to their participation such as their perspectives and community values.
3. The research study is based on world heritage site of Galle fort in Sri Lanka which is leading destinations of the country for last two decades. Therefore comprehensive study is required to understand the changing pattern of land use, tourism development and neighborhood.
4. The process of data collection for the study has been obtained through two sources;
 - Direct interviews from specialist personals related to tourism activities and Galle Heritage Foundation.
 - General interviews carried out on 253 residents covering five neighborhoods located inside the fort.

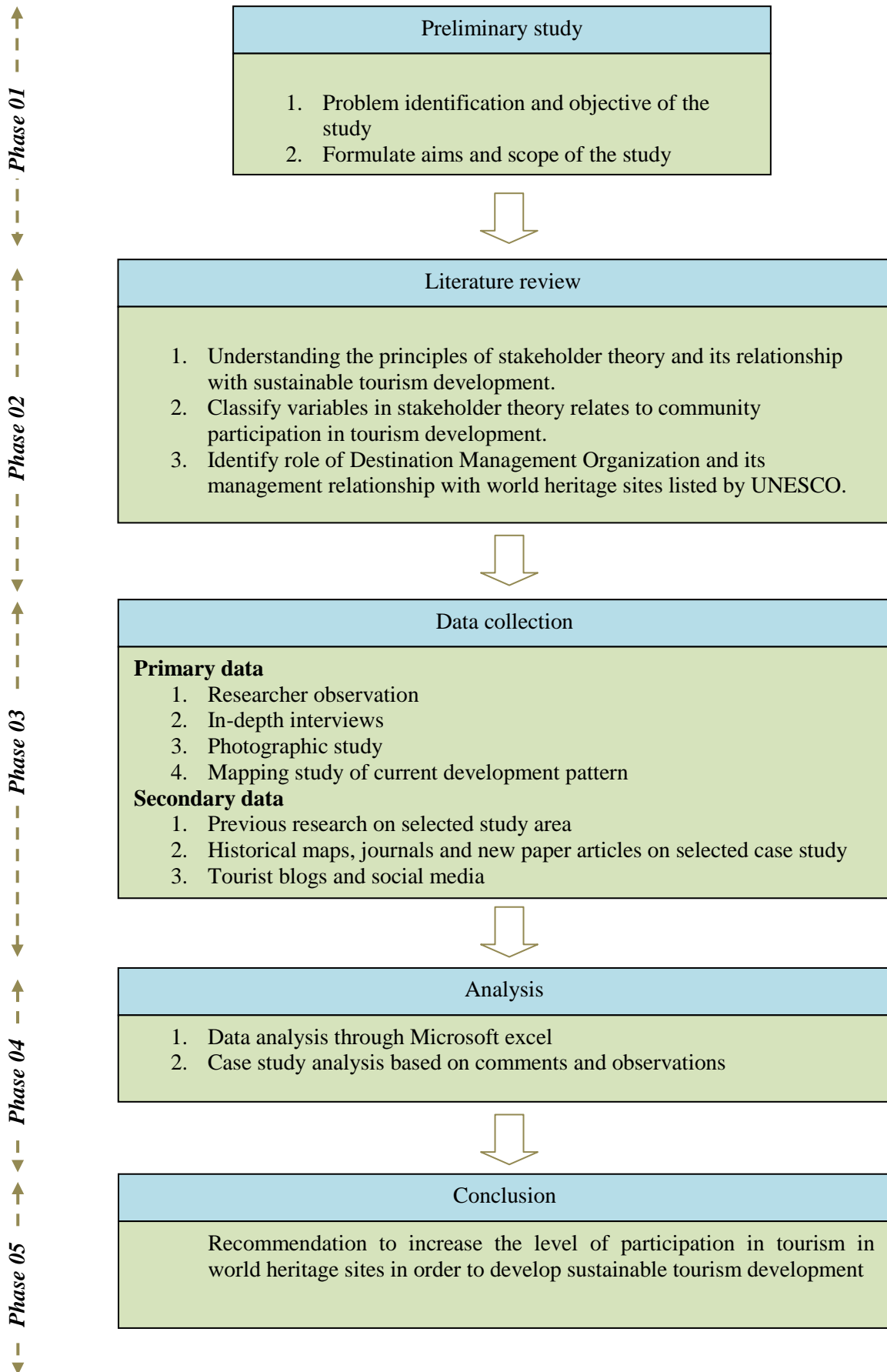


Fig 1.2: Research framework

1.6 Research Methodology

The research is based on five phases as follows,

1. Preliminary study

Initial study was carried out based on stakeholder theory and its principals, concepts and applications into community based tourism. This is facilitated to gain initial understanding of concept of sustainable tourism development from the perspective of social component. This stage is also included a brief study of tourism in world heritage sites in order to understand current issues relating to selected case study of this research. The verified results on issues and problems have further assist to formulate research aims, objectives, scope and significant of the study.

2. Literature review

This stage includes the review of related literature in order to understand the concepts of stakeholder approach, indicators of sustainable tourism development and role of destination management organization as the key points of the research. Additionally, the study includes historical maps, development plans, paper articles, journal papers related to selected case study. Final outcome of the literature review assists to determine the framework and the methodology of the study.

3. Site visit and the data collection

The required data for the study was collected through comprehensive study survey including pilot study, in-depth interviews, and photographic study and via a questionnaire given to selected five neighborhoods. Pilot survey was carried out in order to gain background information about nature of tourism in Galle fort and character of neighborhood prior to formulate research questionnaire. Secondary data was gathered through maps and development documents related to Galle fort and Galle Heritage Foundation after carrying out in depth interviews. Primary data which was the key component of the study was gathered through structured questionnaire focusing on 253 residents which is equal to 26% of total residents of Galle fort. Pictorial study and general interviews of tourists and tourism services suppliers such as taxi drivers, restaurant owners, hoteliers and shop owners were carried out to gain general understanding of tourist behavior in Galle fort.

4. Analysis

The collected data in the survey was analyzed using the appropriate statistic method. Comments and reviews from open-ended questions were analyzed using the content analysis method while referring secondary data such as photographs, land use maps and blog comments from tourists. Structured questions were measured using Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1= strongly disagree, 3= neutral, 5= strongly agree and analysis through the use of SPSS analytical tool.

5. Conclusion

Conclusion of the study was prepared based on the data and information obtained through the research. Final outcome of the research will be benefited in terms of preparing collaborative management plan for destination to increase the support from local communities to achieve sustainable tourism development while pertain the issues relating UNESCO world heritage program.

1.7 Chapter summery

The concept of Destination Management Organization is a novel management approach in Sri Lankan tourism. The importance of such management body is merely outstanding in the context of protected area in order to perform sustainable tourism development. The research will evaluate the local community perspective towards tourism in world heritage sites. The final outcome of this research is to find issues which support to increase their participation in order to achieve sustainable tourism in protected areas.

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