

# Community-Based Tourism Assessment through Community Capital Framework (CCF): Tool for Empowering Indigenous Community

Rhea B. De Guzman

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**Abstract:** The research study investigated whether community-based tourism (CBT) could help in empowering the indigenous community of Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. Marginalization of indigenous communities by virtue of history and limited access to resources has been an issue that could be attributed to historical patterns of discrimination <sup>[1]</sup>. This paper adopted a Community Capitals Framework ( CCF ) to sustainable destination development. This framework is used not only as a tool for analysis, but also offers a way to analyze community and economic development efforts from a systems perspective by identifying the assets in each capital (stock), the types of capital invested (low), the interaction among the capitals, and the resulting impacts across capitals <sup>[2]</sup>.

It focused on CBT potential interventions in Panaytayan, Mansalay and examined the prospects and barriers of an indigenous community, and proposed effective solutions. According to research findings, there is a high potential on the natural, cultural, human and built community capitals to develop its tourism activities. It recommended forming a local tourist council, preserving culture, and using eco friendly measures. The study closed the gap in the literature related to the potential effects of CBT within an indigenous community for an academic audience, as well as local stakeholders and policymakers. It ultimately saw a viable and prosperous tourist location with rich culture and sustainable environment for the local population as well as visitors.

**Keywords:** Community-Based Tourism (CBT), Community Capitals Framework, Indigenous Community Empowerment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Community-based tourism (CBT) is a very innovative way of ensuring that tourists are encouraged while at the same time providing economic growth among communities throughout the globe. CBT can make a difference for the disadvantaged people in the Philippines <sup>[3]</sup>. Community-based tourism has been studied extensively in recent years, found that community-based tourism forms the basis for sustainable tourism by using essential natural resources that can profit the community <sup>[4]</sup>.

The notion of CBT is popular internationally because it helps to save culture heritage and development of local economy<sup>[5]</sup>. However, few researchers examine how exactly CBT influences indigenous community. The resulting gap therefore demands an undertaking to establish the possible role of CBT towards augmenting the sustainable development stature in this area. A study <sup>[6]</sup> is probably concerned with the question how the local community becomes empowered through community based tourism.

As an island province, Oriental Mindoro boast a picturesque landscape, dramatic seascape and an overall image of what a tropical paradise should be white sand beaches, verdant hills and mountains, lush tropical forest endowed with rich biodiversity, mysterious waterfalls and caves, colorful reefs and unique culture and heritage of the province.

Recognizing the diversity of natural resources and culture of its people, the Provincial Government of Oriental Mindoro ( PGOM ) formally embarked on the province- wide initiative to develop tourism <sup>[7]</sup>. The PGOM adopted the 2017-2022 Provincial Tourism Master Plan ( PTMP ) in 2017 and the 2021 - 2025 Comprehensive Tourism Promotional Plan ( CTPP ) in 2021 by the virtue of Provincial Ordinance No. 139-2022. One of the CTPP's objectives is to encourage active community-based tourism endeavors and undertakings. The CTPP also identified the municipality of Mansalay as Cultural Immersion Center of the province which is the research focus of the study.

Community capital framework (CCF) has been identified as a tool with strong applicability to tourism research because it can examine and evaluate movements, programmes or industry within a community or region <sup>[8]</sup>. According to the CCF, capital can be defined as a resource that individuals and / or the community possess, that can be invested in, to help increase the wealth of a community, or the different types of capital. This framework situates community resources / assets into one or more of the following categories of capital: *natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capital* (Figure 1 ). This study sheds light on the transformative potential of community-based tourism as a tool for empowering indigenous community in Panaytayan, Mansalay. Using the CCF, this study assessed the community assets in terms of natural, cultural, human, social and built capital. This emphasized the significance of community participation, cultural conservation, and environmental consideration in preparing the area for CBT potential. It is hoped that this study would provide useful information about the CBT potential using community capital.

Finally, through these capitals, the area will develop creative tourism plan and strategies to achieve sustainable community-based tourism.

**Figure 1. Community assets within the Community Capital Framework ( CCF)**

Community Capital	Description
Natural	Includes resources, beauty, and geography that characterize the community as a place ( e.g. Air quality, land, landscape, water features, water quality, biodiversity, scenery, and natural resources protection )
Cultural	Includes the shared worldviews, values, beliefs, meanings, and behaviour that become tangible through heritage, traditions, language, rituals, dress, and food preparation. Also reflects hegemonic forces that privilege dominant groups.
Human	Focuses on the knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals who can be used to foster community development, particularly leadership. Also includes health and well-being, level of creativity, demographics of community members, and intrinsic qualities ( e.g. self-esteem, self-efficacy, and respect )
Social	Refers to the connections/network between individuals and the level of trust, norms of reciprocity, and cooperation they maintain. It also reflects the common vision and goals, acceptance of alternative views, and diverse representation within discussions made about the community.
Political	Political Reflects the 'organization, connections, voice, and power as citizens turn shared norms and values into standards that are codified into rules, regulations, and resource distributions that are enforced' (Flora et al., 2015, p. 184). This also includes level of community organization through the use of government and the ability of government to garner resources for the community
Financial	Refers to the monetary and financial resources that can be directly invested in other forms of capital (e.g. tax, philanthropic donations, grants, contracts, regulatory exemption, loans, and forms of investment)
Built	Includes infrastructure necessary to support community activities such as housing, transportation infrastructure, telecommunications infrastructure and hardware, utilities (e.g. water treatment, sewer, sidewalks), recreation facilities, and community buildings

Source: Adapted from Flora et al. (2015) and Flora, Emery, Fey, and Bregendahl (2005)

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used a qualitative method through Community Capital Network (CCF). This method is used to describe phenomena that are specific to a certain location. This study uses observations and in-depth interviews as data collection method to uncover the community capital in selected areas in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro. Observations are

used to record and document certain phenomena and uncover its important aspects. Data collection involved interviews, focus groups, and observations to gather qualitative insights from community leaders, community members, and direct observations on community activities. Interviews was audio-recorded and protected for access only by the research team to maintain confidentiality.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research found out the following assets in the community capitals in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental. These includes the natural, cultural, human and built assets.

**Table 1. Natural Capital Assets in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro**

Community Responses
<p>“ In these forests, the lush vegetation creates a paradise for eco tourists and those who just love natural beauty.” (<i>Sa mga kagubatan na ito, ang masaganang halaman ay lumilikha ng paraiso para sa mga eco-tourist at sa mga taong nagmamahal ng natural na kagandahan</i>).</p>
<p>“ The place is also interesting to “bird watchers” because it might be filled with different kinds of “unusual birds”. (<i>Ang lugar ay nakakaakit din sa mga 'bird watchers' dahil maaaring puno ito ng iba't ibang uri ng 'kakaibang ibon</i>).</p>
<p>“ The forest provides excellent trails that are good for adventurers as well as nature lovers.” (<i>Ang kagubatan ay nagbibigay ng mga magagandang daanan na mabuti para sa mga mandarayuhan pati na rin sa mga taong nagmamahal ng kalikasan</i>).</p>
<p>“ What is more, we get excellent places for photography and documentation during our festivity and ritual occasions thus drawing photographers and travel bloggers.” (<i>Bukod pa, nakakakuha tayo ng mahusay na lugar para sa larawan at dokumentasyon sa panahon ng ating mga pagdiriwang at rituwal kaya't ito ay nakakapagdala ng mga potograpo at travel bloggers</i> ).</p>
<p>“ Adventures seeker will have a chance to hike in our clean water falls and experience river cruising.” ( <i>Ang mga naghahanap ng pakikipagsapalaran ay magkakaroon ng pagkakataon na mag-trek sa aming mga malinis na talon at maranasan ang river cruising</i> ).</p>
<p>“ Nature lovers, visitors, hikers, and swimmers can find the best time out as they follow the hiking trails that lead to waterfall and riverbank.” (<i>Ang mga taong nagmamahal sa kalikasan, bisita, mga mandarayuhan, at mga lumalangoy ay maaaring makahanap ng pinakamagandang pagkakataon habang sinusundan nila ang mga hiking trail na patungo sa talon at riverbank</i> ).</p>
<p>“ Our farm served as area where we produce and grown our plants and vegetables for the community’s consumption. ( <i>Yung lupa namin dito ay nagsisilbing taniman ng halaman at gulay para sa pagkain naming lahat dito</i>).</p>

Overall, the above table underscore the potential for diverse and sustainable tourism offerings within the forested area, requiring a holistic approach to leverage its natural assets while ensuring responsible management and conservation. The forested area described multifaceted potential for tourism, presenting implications across various dimensions. Its lush vegetation and natural allure signify a promising landscape for eco-tourism, emphasizing sustainable practices and environmental education to preserve its inherent beauty <sup>[9]</sup>.

**Table 2. Cultural Capital Assets in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro**

Community Responses
<p>"Our Festivals such as that in Panaytayan and the religious ceremonies, notably, the Planting and Harvest Festival served for many people an opportunity to learn about how we do things here". (<i>Ang aming mga Pista gaya ng sa Panaytayan at ang mga seremonyang pangrelihiyon, lalo na ang Planting and Harvest Festival, ay nagbigay ng pagkakataon sa maraming tao na malaman kung paano namin ginagawa ang mga bagay dito</i>).</p>
<p>“ Traditional craftsmanship can be sustained by promoting our traditional handcrafted souvenirs for the tourists.” (<i>Ang tradisyonal na gawaing-kamay ay maaaring mapanatili sa pamamagitan ng pag-promote ng ating mga tradisyonal na likhang-sining bilang mga souvenir para sa mga turista</i>).</p>

“Cultural festivals and workshops which include Indigenous dance and music will sensitize the tourists about our cultural practices.”(*Ang mga kultural na pista at mga workshop na kasama ang pagsasayaw at musika ng mga Katutubo ay magpapahalaga sa mga turista sa ating mga kultural na gawi*).

“The Gurangons or elderly are the one with knowledge and practicing our culture like writing, dances and festivals, in planting and harvest period”(*Yun na lang matatanda dito ang marunong at may kaalaman sa aming ng mga traditional na cultural katuld ng pag sulat, mga sayaw at yung mga festival namin sa pag aani at pag tatanim*).

Local festivals in Panaytayan such as the Planting and Harvest Festival were surviving. Practice of these were limited to the elderly which made lead to memories alone. The promotion of traditional handcrafted souvenirs for tourists is seen as a way to sustain traditional craftsmanship. Additionally, cultural festivals and workshops featuring indigenous dance and music aim to raise awareness among tourists about the community's cultural practices. Local festivals and religious ceremonies act as platforms for cultural exchange, allowing visitors to gain insights into the community's way of life <sup>[10]</sup>.

**Table 3. Human Capital Assets in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro**

**Community Responses**

“It is only our community elders making decision and regulating tourism, for the sake of our community interests and culture protection.” (Maybe, we shall in future allow others into this”.(*Tanging ang mga nakatatandang miyembro ng aming komunidad ang nagdedesisyon at nagpapalakad sa turismo, alang-alang sa interes ng aming komunidad at sa pangangalaga ng kultura.*” *"Marahil, sa hinaharap ay papayagan natin ang iba na makilahok dito*).

“There are some of us here who had different trainings already in farming, waeving and other livelihood but that is very seldom and only few joined the activity because we use our time in farming anf looking for our food everyday.”(*May mga kaunti din dito na nagkaron na ng training tungkol sa pagsasaka, paglala at iba pang panglabuhayan pero bihira yun and ilan lang ang nakakasali dahil; madami sa amin eh nag tatanim at naghahanap ng pagkain namin sa araw araw*).

This emphasized the necessity for inclusive governance structures, responsible engagement training, empowerment strategies, and support for livelihoods to encourage community involvement in sustainable tourism development. Community elders presently oversee tourism decisions, aiming to safeguard community interests and culture [11]. However, there's a push for a local tourism council involving diverse stakeholders to actively participate in decision-making processes [12]. Training initiatives are sought to ensure responsible engagement in tourism activities.

**Table 4. Built Capital Assets in Panaytayan, Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro**

**Community Responses**

"We have roads that four wheels can passed by but we need better roads and signs leading to our attractions to make it easier for tourists to navigate and ensure their safety." As of now, we still don't have that". (*Meron naman kaming kalsada na kasya ang mga four wheels kaso kailangan namin ng mas magandang mga kalsada at mga tanda patungo sa aming mga atraksyon upang gawing mas madali para sa mga turista ang mag-navigate at mapanatiling ligtas ang kanilang paglalakbay.*" *"Sa ngayon, wala pa tayong ganoon*).

"We want to build affordable and eco-friendly accommodations, such as community-operated lodges or homestays, to provide tourists seeking an authentic experience with companionship." We have three (3) in Tanawan only". (*Nais naming magtayo ng abot-kayang at eco-friendly na mga tuluyan, tulad ng mga lodge na pinapatakbo ng komunidad o mga homestay, upang magbigay ng tunay na karanasan sa mga turistang naghahanap ng kasamaan.*" *"Mayroon tayong tatlo (3) sa Tanawan lamang*).

"We have concrete steps in stiffed areas but because of rain it became dangerous and slippery". (*Meron kaming mga semento na parang hagdang na takapan lalo na sa mga matatarik na daan, pero pag umuulan delikado talaga at madulas*).

“We also have potable water fresh from spring for our visitors and for us” (*Meron din kaming tubig na pwede inumin galing sa bukal*).

Improving infrastructure such as roads and signage is crucial for enhancing tourist safety and navigation in the area, yet remains unaddressed. Enhancing roads and signage is vital for ensuring tourist safety and convenience<sup>[13]</sup>. Additionally, enhancing the overall tourist experience involves developing hiking trails, providing guides, and introducing public transportation to overcome challenges like long walks, difficult terrain, and rough roads cited by visitors, emphasizing the need for improved safety measures and trails. Addressing terrain challenges requires the creation of safer trails and appropriate safety measures<sup>[14]</sup>.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings provide strong grounds for the community vision and strategy on how best to utilize tourism for development, preserve culture and environment. Research suggest that an effective approach should include community participation in formulation of policies, establishing local tourism council and promoting responsible tourism through education. Community leaders, therefore, should actively take part in policy management relating to tourism so that local culture and interests are protected and the community becomes more attractive as an authentic cultural destination. In addition, the dedication to green tourism complements what many travelers want nowadays in a place. For the assurance in gearing sustainability the following were recommended;

1. *Implement the Local Tourism Council:* Respond to the suggestion for a local tourism authority to be formed. The members of this council should comprise community representatives, administrators, and professionals who will collectively guide and control the community's tourism sector.
2. *Education and Outreach:* Build on work already done in terms of education of the community regarding responsible tourism practices. It must comprise of training and sensitization programmes, so that community members are aware of their roles towards promoting tourism and the conservation of local cultural heritage and the environment.
3. *Cultural Promotion:* Consolidate initiatives for conservation and promotion of indigenous culture and traditions. Cultural events, heritage protection strategies and story-telling tools aimed at enhancing visitor's experience by giving a distinct voice of the community.
4. *Sustainable Development:* Ensure that tourism development is in tandem with environmentally viable and green activities. Building more eco-friendly accommodations, practice correct waste disposal, and protect threatened species to ensure that tourists do not harm the environment during their stay.
5. *Market the Community's Unique Selling Points:* Use various cultural riches of the community, wonders of the nature, and sustainable tourism as USPs or competitive factors. Effective marketing strategies to attract more travelers interested in realism, responsibility, and ecological compatibility.
6. *Measure and Adapt:* Always evaluate and review such strategies. Gain knowledge on the views of the tourist's community in order to improve on the tourism management approach.

If put into practice alongside the research findings, the community can build a vibrant, culturally enriched and eco-friendly tourism hotspot for both locals and tourists which can be a significant source of their livelihood and development.

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