

Extent of Community Participation in the Ecotourism Project in Caramoan, Camarines Sur, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Among the municipalities in Camarines Sur, Caramoan presents great economic potential. Along with the town's popularity and perceived ecotourism sustainability, it is important that the dynamics of community participation in the ecotourism projects is understood in order to analyze its significance in sustaining or maintaining the ecotourism projects. This study determined the extent of community participation in the ecotourism project in Caramoan, Camarines Sur. Data were gathered using quantitative method. A self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the household heads belonging to the sample. Chi-square test of independence, which used 0.5 level of significance, was employed in testing the relationship between the household heads' socio-demographic characteristics, level of awareness, nature of participation, and level of participation. Findings revealed that the nature of participation of the household heads can be described as mere followers of the leaders and supervisors of the project. They involved themselves in the project because they believed that they could be of help to the project and they could benefit from it. The extent of community participation of Barangay Paniman falls under the third level of participation which is participation by consultation. Based on this, it can be said that the level of community participation in the area is low. Of the variables tested for possible relationship with each other, the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics were found to be significantly related to their nature of participation. In addition, the respondents' level of participation was found to be significantly related only to their membership in organizations.

Keywords: ecotourism, community participation, level of awareness, socio-demographic characteristics, household heads