

ROLE OF COMMUNITY BASED PLANNING & MARKETING FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: While analysing markets & developing strategies to increase visitation with optimised profits remain the core focus area of tourism marketers, it is not enough in itself to achieve the Sustainability in Touristic developments. Present paper is an attempt to reconceptualise the tourism marketing - planning relationship, with a prelude that existing practices of tourism marketing approach are in conflict with community based tourism planning and with Sustainable development in a broader perspective. Present marketing-planning relationship can be best summarized as being in equipoise par se titled in favor of marketing goals of profitability & economic viability on having a closer look. A potential symbiosis between tourism marketing and tourism planning is tempered for being this relationship as one of the conflicting zone in most parts of the world. An analysis of various tourism planning thoughts over the years & a closer examination of participatory tourism planning as a pathway to Sustainable Tourism Development coupled with emerging marketing concepts in general & Societal marketing in specific has provided the theoretical basis for a participatory planning – marketing model aimed at destination promotion on a sustainable development pathway.

Key Words: Tourism Planning, Destination Marketing, Participatory Tourism Planning, Sustainable Tourism Development.

Introduction & Objectives:

Past two decades has witnessed the emergence of tourism as one of the world's major industries, wherein the former is exceeding the importance of many manufacturing and other services in terms of sales revenue, employment generation and foreign currency earnings. While many nations enjoy considerable economic gains from tourism development, a scrutiny of this glossy picture also reveals various costs involved in terms of socio-cultural, ecological degradations and uneven distribution of benefits. For many destinations there exist is a need for prudent tourism planning and marketing in order to both maximise the positive impacts of increased tourism activities and to minimise any negative impacts of this rapidly growing industry, hence a call for more integrated approach to tourism planning is emerged as need of hour. Surprisingly marketing theories with an expansion of social and cultural consideration have not been well considered in tourism planning. While the participatory planning approach is being advanced and accepted as a more adaptive form of planning to minimise negative tourism impacts, tourism marketing seems still advocating the conventional development - *boosterism*. The fundamental question of how marketing can contribute to the integrated goal of tourism planning needs to be examined. Present paper will attempt to address the relationship between marketing and community based planning as an integrated module towards a Sustainable Tourism Development. With this backdrop following objectives can be drawn.

1. To perform a theoretical examination of community-based tourism planning and consumer driven marketing approaches to explore the potential & relevance of possible integration towards a Sustainable Development Plan.
2. To suggest possible dimensions of integration between participatory tourism planning and destination marketing through a conceptual model with general applicability.

Tourism Planning Approaches over the times:

Getz (1987) has identified four broad traditions or approaches to tourism planning: i.e. Boosterism, Economic - Industry-Oriented, Physical/Spatial and Community-Oriented. In the same fashion, Jafari (1990) has classified the traditions of tourism studies and research into four platforms i.e. Advocacy, Cautionary, Adaptancy and Knowledge-Based. Getz further clarified that neither the aforesaid approaches are mutually exclusive, nor they are necessarily sequential. Jafari also stated that all platforms have emerged without replacing one another, hence all four platforms are co existential. Both Getz & Jafari consistently indicated the tourism planning in past was seen as a mere simplistic process, focused on increasing visitations & encouraging mass tourism. This simplistic form of tourism planning too only began in 1960s when the growth of tourism businesses has been recognised gradually as a significant industry. Despite the fact that there were different terms used to capture the evolution of tourism studies and planning approaches, similar themes emerged as illustrated in below table.

Getz (1987)	Planning Focus	Jafari (1990)
Boosterism	Maximise the number of tourists to be attracted and accommodated.	Advocacy
Economic Approach	Optimise the economic & financial benefits, Maximising income and employment.	Advocacy
Physical/Spatial	Carrying capacity, Visitor Expectations & Resource Protection, Managing Tourism impacts.	Cautionary
Community Based	Enhancing local control, Understanding community impacts & involvement of local communities in development process.	Adaptancy
Integrative Approach	Understanding Tourism System & Evaluative Research	Knowledge based

Boosterism, more is better; Advocacy Platform

Prevailed throughout 1960s and early 1970s this 'growth-oriented strategy' employed different promotional strategies as dominant marketing tools to increase visitation, as reflected in public and private tourism organisations spending virtually all of their budgets on promotion (WTO 1979). Apparently marketing strategies focussed simply on promotional campaigns aimed at increasing visitor number & encouraging mass tourism. Tourism planning has evolved over this period (since the Second World War) with an explosion of economic and marketing ideas coming as dominant forces. However it will be noteworthy that the so-called marketing ideas were asymmetrical in the sense that entire focus and techniques were mainly inclined towards one 'P' - promotion. In conclusion Tourism planning during this period was dominated with narrow & unsophisticated marketing ideas.

Economic Approach; Advocacy Platform

With passage of time economic significance of tourism was being observed & Tourism related industries became major wheels for promoting economic advancements. A number of destinations succeeded in achieving their targeted number of visitors & start experiencing positive consequences of tourism development through considerable generation of employment and increased foreign exchange earnings. Marketing still remain at forefront of tourism planning during this period, however relatively complicated approaches including considerations and understandings about tourist behaviour, segmentation, and consumer choice theory were roped in. Concepts such as multipliers and input-output models have been introduced and advanced. This line of thought was aimed at finding the best measurement of what exactly tourism can contribute, or in fact has contributed, to the economic development of a destination.

Community Based Planning Approach; Adaptancy Platform

During 1980s increasing concern about the uneven performances of development and environmental issues led academics and planners to question economic efficiency as a predominant goal of development, not only in the tourism field but also in general planning and development scenario. In response, United Nations appointed an independent World Commission on Environment and Development to examine the problems. Consequently, the concept of 'Sustainable Development' described 'as development pathway that satisfy the needs and wants of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs was formulated and proposed as an agenda to resolve environmental and developmental problems, which was further linked to human rights and clearly emphasized that local people have a right to be consulted about, and to participate in decision making, about activities likely to have an effect on their well being.

Community based tourism planning has come to the forefront and received substantial attention by scholars as well planners & developers. In principle this approach is a quest for community inputs through their active participation in tourism development processes. Smith (1978) rightly states that mobilization of community in this way not only fosters improvements in host-guest relationships but also strengthens human and community bonds, which will result in socio-cultural harmony. Therefore, the community should be consulted and constantly informed of the developments taking place in their locale. Simmons (1994) explains the reasons for community involvement in tourism planning as

"There are two reasons for this. First, the impacts of tourism are felt most keenly at the local destination area and, second, community residents are being recognised as an essential ingredient in the 'hospitality atmosphere' of a destination".

In tune with Simmons' rationale, Murphy (1985) also justifies residents' input as "the industry uses the community as a resource, sells it as a product, and in the process affects the lives of everyone". Tourism draws extensively from community's resources & therefore it must not merely *exploit the* resources for its own benefit without considering what can be reciprocated back to the community.

Following issues need to be addressed while implementing community based tourism planning;

- (1) *Identifying the affected community or communities:* Community divisions (an assessment of existing community structures and composition) need to be further explored for which strata will be affected & how much by proposed tourism development. As understanding this issue will help identify who should participate in what issue? Furthermore, it may further explore what needs to be done to prepare communities in order to achieve a more meaningful participation.
- (2) *Identifying tourism stakeholders:* Local tourism resources have national and international standing as tourism attractants, meaning a stake of national and international firms or organizations in terms of strong 'capitalized' interests. On the other hand local community being exploited of their local resources also a strong candidate for potential stakeholders of proposed development. Local community participation in such multifaceted development is therefore a complex issue & demands a comprehensive analysis before proceeding further.
- (3) *Selecting stakeholders:* Ineffective institutional framework and inadequacy of governance tools constitutes the complexity of this issue & hence good governance as well as sound public management are prerequisites for the implementation of community based tourism development. This includes efforts to ensure an ethical and more transparent government process, as well as decision-making practices sufficiently open to citizens.
- (4) *Selecting the initiators & promoter/convenor of the participatory planning:* Activities such as choosing representatives of relevant entities within the community, selecting issues to be considered and constant communication with the wider community need to be undertaken systematically. Assumption that community empowerment will emerge from within the communities is misleading, hence government intervention & wider control becomes inevitable for a successful community involvement. Tourism planners therefore need to first create a stronger local body (i.e. respectable local government officer or local resident). Government intervention in this matter is a vital aspect as governments not only dominate tourism planning affairs but also possess potential power to control development within the local planning system.

- (5) *Methodology for efficacious public participation*: Tradeoffs between depth (how many members to be involved) and breadth (which strata to be involved & to what extent) of the participation need to be made factoring in the status of the community (as addressed in first issue), current developmental issues, goals of participation, and stages of the planning should shape this compromise.

Tourism Planning & Destination Marketing; Knowledge Based Integrative Approach

Attempts have been made to mitigate the negative effects of tourism development through various planning approaches evolved over the years. Various attempts have been made to overcome the uneven distribution of tourism development cost & benefits, wherein host communities have to bear the bulk of tourism developmental costs, the benefits have too often fallen into a relatively few hands. Factors such as social and environmental pressures and the increasing call for involvement of host communities are keys behind the changing face of tourism planning. Together these pose new challenges to both destination planners and marketers. While tourism-marketers concentrates on increasing visitation and treats tourism like any other commodity, tourism planning concentrates more on the impacts of tourism and takes a strong stand on a more balanced form, where environmental and socio-cultural issues are factored in the planning process. However this can be counterbalanced by pointing out that the existing tourism planners tends to ignore the market dynamics and the requirements of entrepreneurs. From this point of view, there seems to be an urgent need to re conceptualize the relationship between these two approaches.

In practice local leaders and businesses, with the assistance of state tourism agencies, march forward with promotional strategies to attract visitors in their destination areas with little or no concern and/or effort placed on negative impacts these visitors will create. Tourism development is too often planned and marketed without consideration of the local environments or community's needs and wants. In this context, it can be argued that tourism marketing has functioned primarily for the benefit of the tourist, with all its form and dynamics have principally been driven by the industry itself. Meanwhile, the local community has found themselves excluded from the decision making process, and from full and active participation in the growth of tourism in their localities. The potential to improve quality of life and provide the broadest range of benefits to community is compromised by the profit-driven goals and objectives of tourism organizations and to a large extent by regional economic development agenda. A lack of researches to advance our understanding of tourism marketing may to a certain extent, result in the existing misunderstandings, fallacies and malpractice. Unlike the rapid growth of many large-scale commercial service operations, it is observed that the tourism industry has been slow to apply the broader principles of marketing theory. Tourism in fact is one of the last industries to experience the change from a sellers' to a buyers' market. One of the reason why so few tourism firms and organizations fully understand & practice 'broad-based' marketing is the existence of organizational barriers that continue to hinder the successful implementation of marketing and customer-focused strategies. From a tourism firm's perspective, such barriers include an incomplete understanding of the marketing concept, conflicting short term and long term financial goals, overemphasized short-term measures of top management performance and top management's own values and priorities concerning the relative importance of customers and the firm's other publics. Trends in marketing are moving toward a more integrated and sustainable approach This interest has led to an increased research on social responsibility, marketing and quality-of-life, marketing ethics, green or environmental marketing, which alert organizations to be more responsible for the well being of society at large. The key concept of this discussion starts from the necessity of *combining* profit making for any organization with sustainable environmental management. An examination of the above approaches is critical and challenging to tourism marketing simply because the nature and scope of tourism industry *per se* does not limit itself to the participants in a business transaction, service providers, and consumers. The industry's operations inevitably affect all of society. A very significant component of the resources exploited by the tourism industry is, in fact, drawn from public goods. Negative outcomes from tourism development indicate that market mechanisms alone are not sufficient to manage the industry responsibly. The extraordinary complexity of the tourism industry as well as the predominance of small businesses involved in it has also been reported as other impediments. For these reasons, regulation is required if a more responsible tourism marketing and planning is to be implemented successfully, this lead to the conclusion that governmental interventions are necessary in both tourism planning and marketing. It is the governments who formulate national policy, and control development through regulatory processes. Moreover complex nature of tourism makes optimizing and balancing the economic, environmental and social benefits with business profitability, a marketing and planning dilemma for governments and any organization involved.

In addition, under a competitive environment, all organizations are subject to internal pressures toward expansion and externalization of costs. Hence a market-based solution to environmental and social problems could be feasible if only if, environmental and social costs could be translated to the market as prices. Perhaps then the most important driving force for socially responsible marketing approach to take place effectively requires a genuine demand from the 'consumer'. In other words, will the consumers be willing to pay a higher price to support an organization, which is highly socially responsible. Unfortunately, in the past decades, consumers may show a high awareness of the environmental aspects of holiday, but not when booking; hence the discrepancy between attitude and behaviour of consumers does exist. These contradictions are highlighted by the fierce market competition within the tourism industry, for instance, airline deregulation has resulted in the lowering of prices and 'value for money' tour packages. In reality many holidaymakers are on the lookout for a cheap trip, hence 'value for money' is a key factor in purchasing decision. One important conclusion drawn from above discussion is that although market planning has been recognized as an integral part of overall tourism planning process, relatively few empirical studies have been undertaken on the details of marketing planning and its execution particularly within community based tourism planning. Despite increasing social concerns and the call for more community participation, research dealing with these issues in relation to participatory tourism marketing is virtually non-existent. An innovative approach is the need of hour to achieve an appropriate balance between community aspirations and marketing within the planning framework. It is essential to refine further these techniques and utilize systematic marketing processes to concurrently educate, and be informed by, the community.

Conceptualizing the Link between Community-Driven Planning and Marketing:

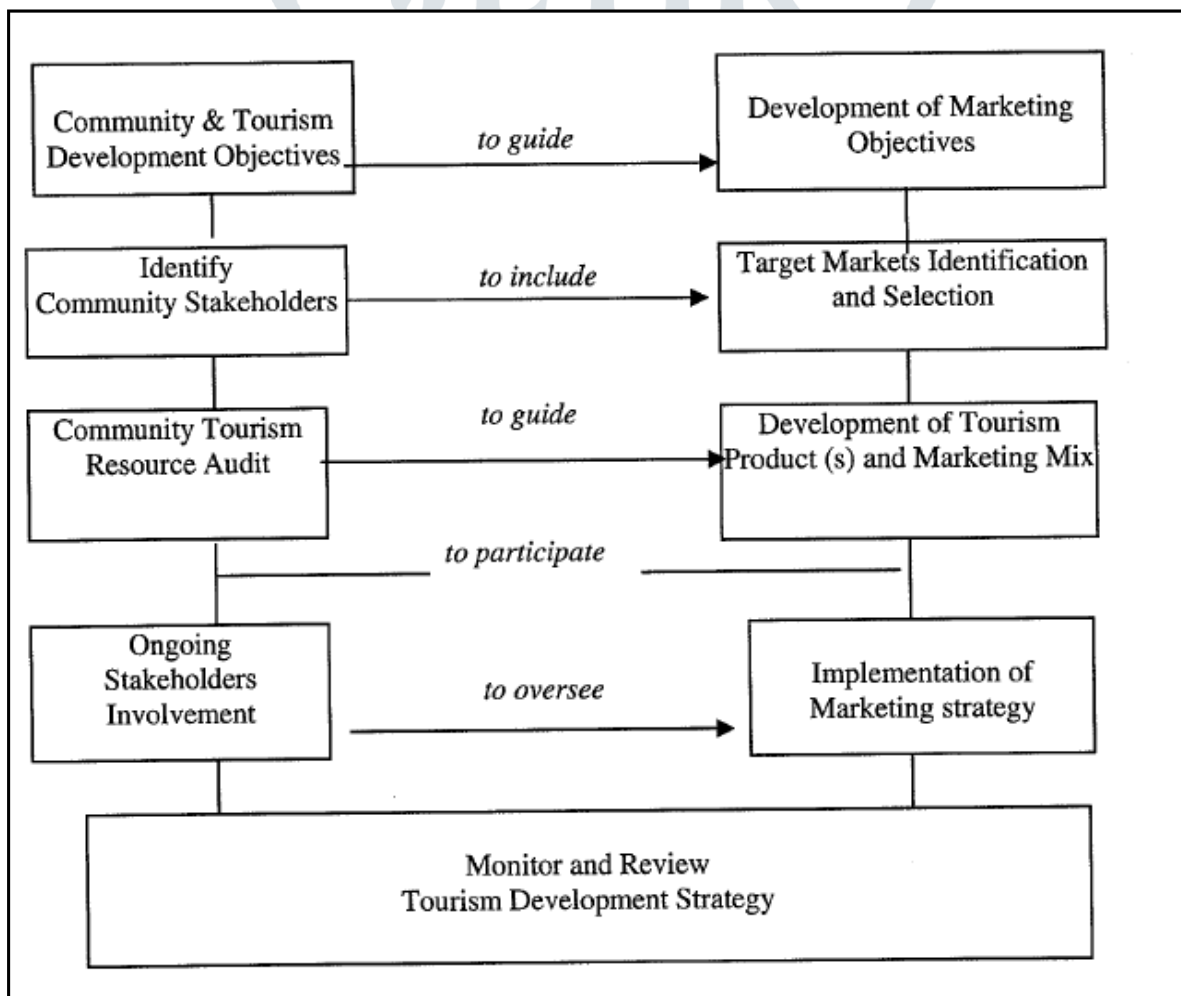
Discussion so far has indicated that tourism may not be an easy candidate for community participation owing to its complexity and the disparate nature, integrating such a difficult planning approach with destination marketing adds more wings to this challenge. While community participation has been admitted as cornerstone in finding a pathway to sustainable tourism, it is therefore essential to find a mechanism whereby marketing can contribute towards advancement of participatory planning approaches. On basis of discussion so far several diverging elements between the dominant marketing approach currently adopted and community-based tourism planning approach can be identified, as illustrated in below table.

Particulars	Tourism Marketing	Community-Based Planning
Convenor & Interest Group	Public & Private sectors tourism business organizations, Central & State governments	Ecologists & Environmentalists, Conservation bodies, Local Governing body
Orientation	Quantative Growth & financial viability	Community benefits & Sustainability
Thrust Area	Market Oriented, Demand based, Economic & financial impacts.	Supply Based, Resource Usage Pattern, Environmental & Socio Cultural Sustainability, Community Development & Stakeholders.
Tools & Techniques	Top – Bottom, Demand Forecasting, Market Selection, & Segmentation, Promotion Mix.	Bottom - Up, Product Mix, Consultation & Information exchange,
Timeframe	Short term	Long Term
Execution & Implementation	Community Infliction, tradeoffs & adjustments.	Continuous Consultation & information sharing between host community & tourism enterprises.

Societal Marketing, A potential approach linking community involvement & destination marketing.

Non-market effects (e.g. pollution, and natural and physical environment degradation), termed extraneous variables have long been borne by society and marketers also have previously discussed and dealt with these as an external influence on the process and content of managerial decision making. However during last decade the interaction between marketing and environmental and social dimensions is becoming more conspicuous, a case could be made that evolving emphasis on social wellbeing, quality of life and societal marketing concept is a reaction to 'consumerism' - the demands of consumer groups for more accountability on the part of business. A firm regarded as socially responsible will have a more favourable corporate evaluation from consumers & leads to a more favourable evaluation of the firm's products. With this perspective societal marketing concept offers a promising approach for attaining greater community participation in tourism marketing and planning as it provides a distinct framework for identifying all involved 'customers' (stakeholders). A possible pathway can be thus be illustrated as follows. Firstly, based on a careful assessment of the community and their knowledge about tourism development, a social marketing programme could be developed to educate/empower community members to overcome the limits and obstacles of participation. Consequently, the effectiveness of participation could gradually be increased. Ultimately community driven marketing programmes will serve following objectives.

1. Educating the community about the nature of tourism and the necessity of their involvement in planning and marketing of their local destinations,
2. Empowering the community to initiate actions on their own and thus influence the processes and



outcomes of development.

3. To support individuals' initiatives and capacities to sustain community control even after a social/societal marketing campaign is completed.

Secondly, in the development of an external marketing programme within the planning process, marketing techniques could be designed systematically to secure a true kind of community consultation and on-going information exchange between planners and the community. An aim of this consultation is to identify

community aspirations whereby marketing strategies can be devised accordingly. While traditional marketing places heavy emphasis on the potential customer's needs and desires, community driven tourism marketing begins with the consideration of a community's values, goals and needs. Preserving the integrity of the natural and cultural resource base is the foundation of such an approach'. Above arguments combined with contemporary tourism planning and marketing techniques have led to the formulation of a prescriptive model of the way tourism planning and marketing 'could' or 'should be' formulated and implemented.

A Conceptual Model linking participatory planning with tourism marketing.

Afore stated model provides logical steps and segments outlining necessary components regarding how participatory planning and marketing should be integrated & conducted. However factoring in multifaceted nature of tourism, practical application of the same is not an easy task, hence preceding contradictory variables need to be trade off in order to achieve a successful implementation.

Customer Orientation versus Community Orientation

While it is noted that degree of customer orientation is in direct proportion to potential success of marketing activities, then significant linkages between community-driven planning & destination marketing and possible integration will depend largely on identifying the customers of tourism development, inherent within the societal marketing approaches is the idea of widening the customer orientation to include other stakeholders. Although a comprehensive stakeholders group for tourism remains inconclusive, the common theme from a community-based planning context identifies that community is viewed as the primary customer. Marketers therefore need to integrate the community into their consumer orientation and take community needs and wants into consideration when formulating tourism policies and strategies. Based on this innovative approach, broad customer groups for tourism and their general needs and expectations from tourism development can be outlined as follows

Tourists	Community	Future Generations
Relaxation & Novelty Safety & Value for money Accommodation & Other Touristic Infrastructure	Income & Employment Quality of Life Protection of local resources Maintenance of local social, cultural & environmental fabric.	Resources to meet their needs

The arguments put forward in this paper are that current marketing practices have been focused merely on tourists' satisfaction. This scope is incomplete as it is missing two significant components of stakeholders i.e. host community & future generations.

Integrated Effort and Interaction within Tourism Systems

Community-based marketing requires an integrated effort. The process should neither be a top-down, nor bottom-up approach instead it should be an interactive approach which requires coordination and interaction between the various stakeholders, and planners as well marketers. In other words, community driven tourism marketing should be a product of the relationships and communication within the tourism system, interests and values of every party involved should be considered. Such a constant interaction within the system helps explain why community driven marketing is so demanding in terms of time, information, and expertise required. Two interrelated points as outlined below are particularly significant as well as problematic.

- 1) *Coordination and linkages within planning institutions*: Tourism marketers need to conceptualise how their functions fit into other planning elements. For instance, within the national tourism organisation, marketing departments must be linked to the planning division and should be seen as a part of the overall planning process. It is important to scrutinize how such social and environmental elements can be incorporated and translated more effectively into marketing implementation.
- 2) *Public Sector Coordination* : The lack of single authorities responsible for tourism development requires collaboration and partnership amongst governmental bodies and across community stakeholders. An essential element of 'community-driven marketing' approach is an establishment of inter-organisational relationships in which information flow is maximised for coordination to occur.

Government has been identified as an important constituent in 'orchestrating' all players within tourism system. Finding a systematic administrative structure and mechanism in order to plan tourism marketing in an integrated manner remains extremely difficult.

A Profit and Social Wellbeing Focus:

While the idea of self-regulation through responsible marketing programmes is indispensable, achieving such an integrated path is problematic particularly in the tourism context. As noted, tourism is considered to be a complex system, predominantly driven by the private sector. It is common for the private sector to direct their individual marketing efforts towards growth and profitability. This direction however often fails to protect adequately the environment on which industry depends for its existence. Individuals or the private sector are not able to come together to coordinate a strategy to protect (or enhance) the environment because they regard it as a 'free' resource to which their own individual activities do little harm. The necessity of developing a societal marketing approach is widely recognised, but how marketers could, and most likely would, change their practices (i.e full internationalisation of social costs) needs to be spelled out more clearly. In addition, tourism planners and marketers need to recognise that implementing marketing activities aiming for highest growth (high volume of visitors) may not be the best strategic outcome. There is an urgent need of segmenting tourists not all forms of tourism or types of visitor are compatible with all destinations. Careful attention to high-quality, highyield visitors will benefit the community much more than indiscriminate mass marketing. In summary, the common elements of both the marketing concept and community-based planning (a customer orientation as well as community orientation) suggest a possible link between the marketing and community based planning. There is a need to reengineer tourism organisational structures and reset tourism development goals to allow the societal marketing concept to be utilised to its full potential in harmonizing tourism growth with community developments & availability of resources for future developments.

Pointers for further research:

While broad this paper attempts a general framework regarding community-driven marketing approach, a detailed insight into each piece of factors needs to be compromised. Methodologies for training and empowering local bodies, roles of national tourism bodies in it, marketing activities of individual firms in aggregate & whether these activities and/or campaigns support the community aspirations, finding optimal regulatory frameworks and conditions supportive of responsible marketing, adaptability of public private partnership for a community driven marketing approach, empirical studies incorporating the model suggested to find possible lacunas can be possible areas for further studies.

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