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# EVOLUTION AND RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM: A 25-YEAR COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW AND POST- PANDEMIC TRAJECTORIES (2001-2025)

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## Abstract

This comprehensive review examines the evolution and transformative pathways of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) over 25 years (2001-2025), addressing significant gaps in epoch-specific analyses. Utilizing a documentary research approach, the study synthesizes developments in CBT across economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and governance dimensions, with a specific focus on Southeast Asian case studies. The analysis is delineated into three distinct phases. The pre-COVID-19 era (2001-2019) highlights CBT's rapid growth as a critical alternative to mass tourism, fostering multidimensional local empowerment while exposing persistent challenges, including overtourism, inequitable distribution of benefits, and capacity deficits. The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021) caused unprecedented industry disruption and severely impacted tourism-dependent livelihoods; however, it simultaneously catalyzed rapid digital adaptation and underscored the absolute necessity of community resilience. Finally, the post-COVID-19 epoch (2022-2025) reveals an uneven global recovery characterized by digital transformation, the strategic integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, and the emergence of regenerative tourism frameworks. Ultimately, the future sustainability of CBT relies on robust local governance, equitable resource sharing, diversified income streams, and the strategic application of responsible technologies to build a resilient ecosystem that genuinely empowers host communities.

**Keywords:** Community-Based Tourism, Post-Pandemic Recovery, Tourism Resilience, Regenerative Tourism, Digital Transformation

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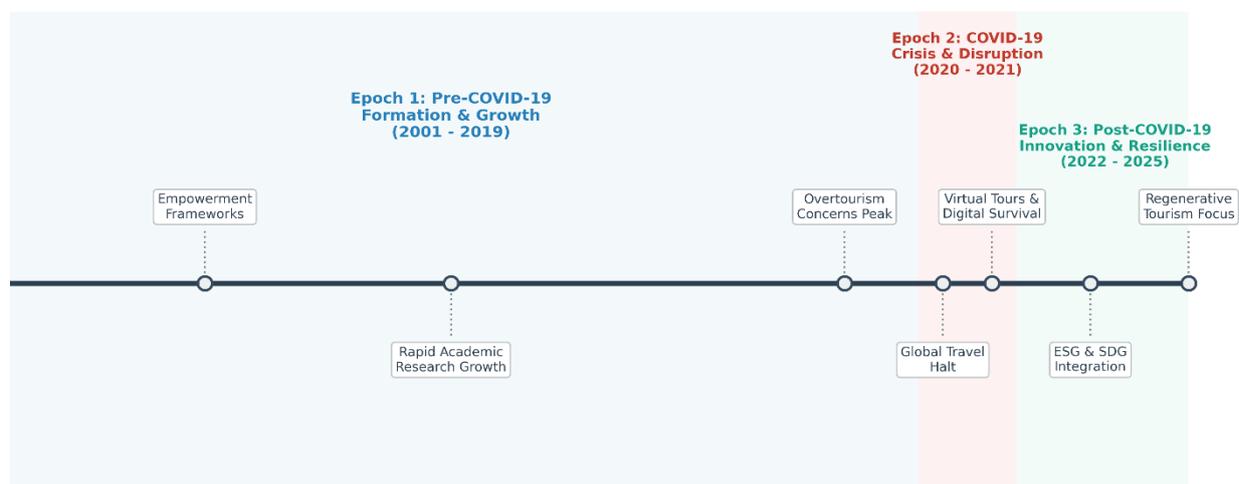
## Introduction

Community-Based Tourism (CBT) has emerged as a crucial paradigm for sustainable tourism development throughout the first quarter of the 21st century (Asker et al., 2010; López-Guzmán et al., 2011). The concept of CBT arose in response to the negative impacts of mass tourism, which often degrades cultural and environmental resources and exacerbates economic disparities within local communities (Blackstock, 2005; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2019). Placing communities at the heart of tourism development processes is therefore not merely an ethical choice but a proactive strategy for fostering long-term sustainability across economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Giampiccoli & Mtapuri, 2012; Dangi & Jamal, 2016).

However, despite CBT's widespread recognition in both academic discourse and practical implementation, significant gaps persist in understanding its development dynamics over the past 25 years (2001-2025). Specifically, there is a notable absence of comprehensive literature reviews that rigorously examine epochal changes and the in-depth impacts of the COVID-19 crisis, which served as a critical turning point for the global tourism industry (Sigala, 2020; Gössling et al., 2021). Furthermore, a lack of interdisciplinary synthesis integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives, ranging from academics, practitioners, policymakers, and local communities themselves, who are at the core of CBT, remains apparent.

This research addresses four primary objectives. First, to comprehensively review and synthesize the literature on CBT during the first quarter of the 21st century (2001-2025). Second, to analyze the trends and developments of CBT in the pre-COVID-19 period (2001-2019), focusing on its conceptual foundations, theoretical frameworks, and diverse practices. Third, to examine the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on CBT during 2020-2021, including community adaptation strategies. Moreover, finally, to explore the recovery and new directions of CBT in the post-COVID-19 era (2022-2025), emphasizing innovation, digital technologies, and the integration of new sustainability dimensions.

The scope of this study spans the period from 2001 to 2025, with the conceptual timeline and shifting paradigms visually mapped in Figure 1 to illustrate the three main epochs: pre-COVID-19 (2001-2019), during COVID-19 (2020-2021), and post-COVID-19 (2022-2025). In terms of content, this study rigorously analyzes CBT across four key interconnected dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, environmental, and governance, paying close attention to policy participation, local empowerment, and multi-stakeholder collaboration frameworks. Particular emphasis is placed on synthesizing evidence from case studies in Southeast Asia, especially Thailand, where interdisciplinary approaches to CBT have seen extensive and complex development.



**Figure 1** The Trajectory of Global Tourism Crises and CBT Paradigm Shifts (2001-2025)

## **Methodology and Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this review and analysis employs an interdisciplinary approach integrating Stakeholder Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework to provide a comprehensive and in-depth perspective on CBT phenomena (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008; Dangi & Jamal, 2016). The methodology involves documentary research, with a comprehensive review of secondary data from various authoritative sources. This explicitly includes research articles published between 2001 and 2025 in national academic journals indexed in the Thai-Journal Citation Index (TCI) and in international peer-reviewed journals indexed in leading global databases such as Scopus, Web of Science (WoS), JSTOR, and PubMed. Additional relevant literature was retrieved through targeted searches in comprehensive academic databases such as Google Scholar. Furthermore, the review systematically incorporates statistical reports from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), policy documents from government agencies, and empirical case studies from diverse geographical and cultural contexts. Data analysis utilizes content analysis and is presented as a descriptive-analytical synthesis, emphasizing cross-source integration, cross-context comparison, and the identification of emerging trends and patterns.

The anticipated benefits of this study are multifaceted. Academically, this comprehensive review will serve as a foundational knowledge base for researchers to understand the evolution of CBT and identify existing research gaps. At the policy level, the findings will provide empirical evidence to help policymakers design effective and context-appropriate CBT support measures. In practice, communities and operators will gain insights and lessons from diverse case studies to apply to sustainable CBT development, especially in the post-COVID-19 world, which demands adaptation and operational innovation.

## **Community-Based Tourism (2001-2019): Formation and Growth**

The concept and definitions of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) evolved from diverse theoretical frameworks during the first two decades of the 21st century, sharing a common emphasis on local communities as the central focus of tourism development processes (Salazar, 2012; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016). Asker et al. (2010) define CBT as a form of tourism where local communities exercise significant control and participation in its development and management, and receive equitable benefit sharing. Similarly, Goodwin and Santilli (2009) underscore that CBT must foster genuine community ownership rather than merely tokenistic participation. Key principles of CBT widely accepted by scholars include community involvement in decision-making (Kibicho, 2008), economic and social empowerment (Scheyvens, 2002), equitable benefit sharing, and the sustainable conservation of natural and cultural resources (Denman, 2001).

The global tourism context prior to COVID-19 revealed continuous and remarkable growth. According to UNWTO data, international tourist arrivals increased from 674 million in 2000 to 1.46 billion in 2019, representing more than a 2-fold increase over two decades (UNWTO, 2020). This expansion presented both opportunities and challenges, particularly in the form of overtourism in popular destinations such as Venice, Barcelona, and Amsterdam (Koens et al., 2018). In this context, CBT was viewed as an alternative that could distribute tourism benefits to rural and remote communities while simultaneously alleviating pressure on popular destinations (Mitchell & Muckosy, 2008).

Academic developments in CBT during 2001-2019 showed a significant increase in research, especially with a rapid rise in CBT-related publications after 2010 (Tasci et al., 2013). The majority of this research focused on developing countries in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America, reflecting CBT's role in the socio-economic development of these nations (Zapata et al., 2011). The most frequently employed theoretical framework was Social Exchange Theory, which posits that community attitudes and behaviors towards tourism are contingent on their

perceptions of costs and benefits (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2011). Additionally, Stakeholder Theory was widely utilized to analyze power dynamics and participation in CBT contexts (Byrd, 2007).

In the economic dimension, CBT was perceived as a crucial tool for reducing poverty and generating rural employment (Ashley et al., 2007; Scheyvens, 2007). Several studies found that CBT could generate diverse income streams for communities, including revenue from accommodation services, food, guiding, and handicraft sales (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). However, a significant challenge was equitable distribution of benefits, with many case studies revealing internal community inequalities in which individuals with greater capital and education often benefited more (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014). Furthermore, over-reliance on tourism could create economic vulnerability during crises (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004). The socio-cultural dimension of CBT focused on community empowerment and cultural preservation. Scheyvens (2002) proposed an empowerment framework comprising four dimensions: economic, social, psychological/spiritual, and political. Successful CBT initiatives could enhance local cultural pride, encourage youth interest in learning and perpetuating traditional knowledge, and build community confidence in managing their own resources (Cole, 2006). However, concerns persisted regarding the "commodification" of culture, where traditions and customs might be altered or presented in inauthentic ways to meet tourist expectations (Salazar, 2012).

The environmental dimension of CBT was closely linked to ecotourism, emphasizing the conservation of natural resources and biodiversity through community participation (Kiss, 2004). CBT in or near protected areas often had a dual objective of conservation and community development. Prominent examples included CBT in the Amazon rainforest, wildlife reserves in Africa, and coastal areas in Southeast Asia (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Nevertheless, tensions between conservation and development often arose, especially when conservation regulations restricted local communities' access to resources (Büscher & Fletcher, 2015).

Governance and policy were crucial to CBT's success. Tosun (2000) identified three barriers to community participation: operational barriers (lack of skills and resources), structural barriers (unequal power structures), and cultural barriers (unfavorable attitudes and values towards participation). The role of government was thus essential in creating an enabling policy framework and accessible support mechanisms (Beeton, 2006). In the Southeast Asian context, several countries developed formal CBT policies, such as Thailand, which implemented homestay standards and quality certification systems (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014). However, policy implementation still faced numerous challenges, particularly regarding inter-agency coordination, financial support, and community capacity building.

Significant case studies from various regions provided diverse lessons. In Thailand, successful homestay villages, such as Ban Mae Kampong in Chiang Mai, illustrated the importance of visionary leadership, strong social capital, and support from non-governmental organizations (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015). In Indonesia, Pentingsari village in Central Java became a model "Desa Wisata" (tourism village) where local wisdom and social entrepreneurship in tourism significantly contributed to sustainable tourism development (Aji, 2020; Husen et al., 2025). In Africa, the case of Conservancies in Namibia demonstrated that CBT could effectively incentivize communities to engage in wildlife conservation (Naidoo et al., 2016). In Latin America, CBT projects in indigenous villages in Ecuador and Peru showcased the potential to integrate forest conservation with income generation (Stronza & Gordillo, 2008). Key challenges for CBT in the pre-COVID-19 period were multifaceted. Firstly, communities often lacked capacity and skills, particularly in marketing, management, and foreign languages (Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Secondly, inadequate infrastructure, such as difficult-to-access transportation and limited facilities, affected tourist experience and CBT competitiveness

(Trejos & Chiang, 2009). Thirdly, difficulties in accessing markets and distribution channels meant that CBT largely relied on intermediaries or large tour operators, who often absorbed a significant portion of the benefits (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010). Finally, governance issues and internal community conflicts could arise from competition for control over tourism resources or dissatisfaction with benefit distribution (Blackstock, 2005; Mtapuri & Giampiccoli, 2016).

### **The Impact of COVID-19 on Community-Based Tourism (2020-2021): A Historic Crisis and Adaptation**

The outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 inflicted an unprecedented and severe impact on the global tourism sector. The UNWTO (2021) reported a 73% decline in international tourist arrivals in 2020 and a further 72% decline in 2021 compared to 2019. This represented a loss of approximately 2 billion international trips. This collapse resulted in an estimated loss of US\$2 trillion in international tourism receipts and over 100 million jobs worldwide (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021). Containment measures, such as border closures, quarantines, and travel restrictions, brought tourist mobility to a near-complete halt during the first half of 2020 (Gössling et al., 2021). The impact was uneven across regions, with Asia-Pacific being the most affected, experiencing an 84% decline in 2020, followed by Africa and Europe (UNWTO, 2021).

The repercussions for CBT were even more severe due to its inherent reliance on tourism-generated income and often a lack of reserve capital to weather crises (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020). Economically, the halt in tourism led to the loss of primary household incomes for CBT-dependent communities, especially among homestay operators, local guides, and handicraft vendors (Gössling et al., 2021). A study in Thailand found that homestay-operating households had to revert to farming or general labor to survive, resulting in a significant reduction in income (Sann et al., 2022). Similar severe impacts on community members' well-being were observed in tourism-reliant communities within the same region, such as the Philippines (Alcantara, 2024) and Indonesia (Huser et al., 2022).

In the socio-cultural dimension, the COVID-19 crisis profoundly affected community well-being and mental health. Anxiety about income, their children's prospects, and the ability to preserve cultural heritage significantly intensified (Ateljevic, 2020). The disruption of cultural activities organized for tourists, such as rituals and performances, also impacted the transmission and preservation of local indigenous knowledge. Nevertheless, some communities utilized this period to strengthen internal capacities, reassess operational approaches, and develop new skills through online training programs (Sigala, 2020).

Environmentally, the effects were mixed, presenting both positive and negative consequences. Positively, the reduction in tourist numbers allowed ecosystems in many areas to recover, leading to decreased pollution and expanded wildlife habitats (Corlett et al., 2020). Conversely, in some communities deprived of tourism income, poaching and illegal logging increased as residents sought alternative livelihoods (Lindsey et al., 2020). Furthermore, some areas faced challenges related to accumulated waste from previous tourist activity and a lack of maintenance of tourism infrastructure due to budget deficits (Hall et al., 2020).

CBT faced several immediate challenges during the COVID-19 period. Firstly, a lack of reserve funds and limited access to social welfare systems distinguished CBT from larger tourism businesses, which typically had more resources and government support (Baum et al., 2020). Secondly, adapting to new hygiene and safety measures, such as Thailand's SHA (Safety and Health Administration) standards, proved difficult. These required investments in accommodation upgrades, which communities often lacked the resources for (Bumyut et al., 2024). Thirdly, maintaining the continuity of community organizations and networks was challenging, as many members had to seek alternative employment and were unable to attend meetings or participate in collective activities (Romagosa, 2020).

The increased academic interest in CBT and COVID-19 was notable. Le (2025) analyzed a rapid increase in the number of articles on CBT and COVID-19. Prominent research topics included community resilience to crises, adaptation and recovery strategies, socio-economic impacts, and the role of digital technologies in maintaining market connections. Indonesia led this research output with 175 articles, followed by Malaysia with 78. At the same time, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Singapore also demonstrated significant collaboration, reflecting the severe impact of COVID-19 on the region's tourism sector.

Case studies of CBT adaptation during COVID-19 provided valuable lessons. In Thailand, some communities developed virtual tour programs to maintain market connections, generate modest income, preserve relationships with former clients, and foster hope for the future (Bumyut et al., 2024). In Indonesia, some communities collaborated with universities to develop hygiene protocols and train community members, also utilizing this time to improve infrastructure and develop new tourism products (Jamal & Budke, 2020). In Nepal, communities along the Everest trekking route diversified into organic farming and online sales of produce to reduce their sole reliance on tourism (Nepal, 2020).

Thus, the COVID-19 crisis offered several critical lessons. Firstly, resilience emerged as a key attribute of sustainable CBT, signifying the ability to cope quickly with and recover from crises. Communities with diversified income sources, strong social capital, and effective management systems were better equipped to navigate the crisis (Hall et al., 2020). Secondly, the imperative for robust welfare systems and government support became urgent. Government aid measures needed to be designed to reach small communities and micro-enterprises, not just large businesses (Benjamin et al., 2020). Thirdly, digital technology became increasingly vital for maintaining market contact. Online marketing, digital booking and payment systems, and virtual experiences were all tools that CBT needed to develop and utilize (Sigala, 2020). Finally, the crisis presented an opportunity to reassess and refine tourism models, emphasizing sustainability, quality over quantity, and fostering genuine relationships between tourists and local communities (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

### **Post-COVID-19 Recovery and New Directions for Community-Based Tourism (2022-2025): An Era of Transformation and Innovation**

The global tourism recovery post-COVID-19 has exhibited considerable variability and unevenness across different regions. The UNWTO (2023) reported that international tourism recovered to 63% of 2019 levels in 2022, accounting for approximately 900 million arrivals. The first quarter of 2023 saw an 80% recovery, with full restoration to 2019 levels anticipated by late 2024 (UNWTO, 2024). This recovery was regionally disparate: Europe and the Middle East experienced the fastest rebound, while the Asia-Pacific region lagged due to slower border reopening policies, particularly in China and Japan (UNWTO, 2023). Notably, domestic tourism recovered significantly faster than international tourism, reflecting continued traveler caution and lingering travel restrictions (Sharma et al., 2021).

The recovery and adaptation of CBT in the post-COVID-19 era have underscored the importance of building resilience and integrating innovation. Sharma et al. (2021) identified three crucial characteristics of successful CBT recovery: the presence of risk management and emergency plans, diversification of income sources and markets, and the proactive adoption of digital technologies. Rehabilitation of infrastructure and enhancement of hygiene standards have become imperative for CBT to instill confidence in tourists (Bumyut et al., 2024). Furthermore, investment in training and new skill development, particularly in digital literacy, online marketing, and novel service offerings, has become increasingly vital (Sigala, 2020).

Post-COVID-19 innovations and emerging trends in tourism are multi-faceted and compelling. Digital transformation stands out as the most prominent trend. Kurniawan et al. (2025) highlight that successful CBT initiatives in the post-COVID-19 era have fully leveraged digital

technologies, ranging from social media marketing (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) and online booking/payment systems to the use of QR codes for local information and the provision of virtual reality experiences for tourists unable to travel physically. In Indonesia, the case of CMC Pantai Tiga Warna exemplifies the successful implementation of digital marketing and green technology, leading to a sustained increase in visitor numbers from 2022 to 2024, even amidst the recovery context.

The integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into CBT represents another significant trend. Quynh (2025) proposes a framework for evaluating and developing CBT based on ESG principles, emphasizing not only economic benefits but also environmental responsibility, social equity, and good governance. The alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), has become a crucial reference framework for CBT planning and evaluation (Jackson, 2025).

New tourism models have also emerged post-COVID-19. Creative Tourism, which emphasizes tourist engagement and learning, has gained increasing popularity. The case of Ban Ruam Thai in Prachuap Khiri Khan, Thailand, demonstrates the successful development of creative tourism packages that integrate indigenous knowledge, community-based activities, and nature conservation (Sirichakkaraset et al., 2025). Wellness Tourism, integrated with CBT, is another rapidly growing trend, particularly in Thailand, where community-based wellness programs focus on local herbs, traditional Thai massage, and health-related activities (Thojampa et al., 2023). The concept of Regenerative Tourism, which aims beyond sustainability by focusing on restoring and creating added value for ecosystems and societies, has also begun to attract attention within the CBT sector (Bellato & Pollock, 2025).

Addressing overtourism and ensuring sustainable management have once again become critical issues as tourism recovers. Dodds and Butler (2019) suggest that COVID-19 provided an opportunity to "reset" the tourism industry and avoid a return to previous overtourism problems. CBT is perceived as part of the solution by dispersing tourists to diverse areas, promoting off-season travel, and emphasizing quality over quantity (Sharma et al., 2021). Management strategies employed include setting carrying capacities, implementing time slot management for visits, and pricing that reflects true social and environmental costs (Peeters et al., 2018).

Climate change adaptation has become an urgent concern for CBT, especially in vulnerable areas such as coastlines, high-altitude regions, and small islands. Scott et al. (2019) propose that CBT should integrate climate change adaptation into development plans, which include building disaster-resilient infrastructure, diversifying risks through multiple income streams, and developing climate-appropriate tourism products. The role of local wisdom in adaptation is also crucial, encompassing knowledge of weather forecasting, water management, and biodiversity conservation (Adger et al., 2005).

Academic developments during 2022-2025 indicate an increased use of mixed methods research and bibliometric analysis to understand the overall landscape of CBT research (Tuyen et al., 2025). Prominent research topics include post-COVID resilience, digital transition, ESG integration, SDG linkages, and the impacts of climate change. However, significant research gaps persist, particularly the lack of long-term studies tracking the sustained effects of CBT on communities, the absence of cross-contextual comparative studies using consistent conceptual frameworks, and the need to develop appropriate indicators and evaluation tools for CBT (Krittayaruangroj et al., 2023).

Post-COVID success stories offer valuable lessons. In Indonesia, Conto village in Central Java demonstrated rapid recovery by leveraging strong social capital and efficient internal communication systems (Padmaningrum et al., 2025). In Vietnam, integrating ESG principles

into CBT in coastal communities has helped attract environmentally and socially conscious tourists, though challenges related to investment disparities between communities remain (Quynh, 2025). In Africa, the combination of CBT with wildlife conservation in several countries showcased the potential to generate income while preserving biodiversity, despite persistent infrastructure and capacity challenges (Spenceley et al., 2019).

The role of policy and support in the post-COVID era is crucial for the success of CBT. Several governments have revised policy frameworks to facilitate CBT recovery and development. Thailand launched the "Amazing Thailand Safety and Health Administration: SHA" to build confidence in hygiene and safety standards, alongside financial support programs for CBT operators to improve infrastructure (Artharn et al., 2022). Indonesia focused on developing "Desa Wisata" (tourism villages) by providing support for training, marketing, and access to funding (Pramono & Juliana, 2025). Collaboration among government, private sector, and communities has become a promoted model, seen as key to CBT sustainability (Jamal & Stronza, 2009). However, challenges in policy implementation persist, particularly concerning inter-agency coordination, communication with grassroots communities, and establishing flexible mechanisms that respond to diverse community needs (Blackstock, 2005).

### Conclusion and Recommendations: Charting a Sustainable Future for Community-Based Tourism

This review of CBT development throughout the first 25 years of the 21st century (2001-2025) reveals a complex and challenging yet opportune and innovative trajectory. CBT has evolved from a marginal alternative concept to a mainstream paradigm for sustainable tourism development, particularly in developing countries. Segmenting this period into three key phases—pre-COVID-19 (2001-2019), during COVID-19 (2020-2021), and post-COVID-19 (2022-2025)—as summarized in Table 1, clearly illuminates the dynamics of change, crisis response, and continuous adaptation. This comprehensive breakdown highlights the critical evolution of governance structures, policy frameworks, and interdisciplinary integration. CBT's growing importance on the international development agenda, particularly its explicit linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ESG principles, reflects a broader recognition of its multi-dimensional role in sustainable community development.

**Table 1** Synthesis of Community-Based Tourism Evolution across Key Dimensions (2001-2025)

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Pre-COVID-19 (2001-2019): Growth &amp; Challenges</b>	<b>COVID-19 (2020-2021): Disruption &amp; Adaptation</b>	<b>Post-COVID-19 (2022-2025): Innovation &amp; Resilience</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Poverty reduction; alternative income; issues with inequitable benefit distribution.	Halt in tourism income; reliance on agriculture; necessity of financial reserves.	Diversification of income; focus on high-value creative/wellness tourism.
<b>Socio-cultural</b>	Community empowerment; cultural preservation vs. commodification risks.	Heightened anxiety; disruption of traditions; adoption of virtual training.	Digital literacy enhancement; emphasis on community resilience and well-being.
<b>Environmental</b>	Ecotourism focus; tensions between local	Temporary ecosystem recovery; isolated increases in	Regenerative tourism emergence; active climate change

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Pre-COVID-19 (2001-2019): Growth &amp; Challenges</b>	<b>COVID-19 (2020-2021): Disruption &amp; Adaptation</b>	<b>Post-COVID-19 (2022-2025): Innovation &amp; Resilience</b>
	resource access and conservation.	poaching due to income loss.	adaptation; ESG integration.
<b>Governance &amp; Policy</b>	Top-down support; structural barriers; basic standardization (e.g., homestays).	Urgent need for inclusive welfare systems; implementation of SHA health standards.	Multi-stakeholder collaboration; resilient policy frameworks; participatory governance.
<b>Economic</b>	Poverty reduction; alternative income; issues with inequitable benefit distribution.	Halt in tourism income; reliance on agriculture; necessity of financial reserves.	Diversification of income; focus on high-value creative/wellness tourism.

Key lessons from each period are invaluable for charting CBT's future. From the pre-COVID-19 era, we learned that CBT genuinely possesses the potential to generate multi-faceted benefits for communities across economic, socio-cultural, and environmental dimensions (Scheyvens, 2007; Dangi & Jamal, 2016). However, success is not automatic but hinges on genuine community participation in decision-making, equitable distribution of benefits, and robust governance (Tosun, 2000; Goodwin & Santilli, 2009). Continuous capacity building and essential skill development, often overlooked, are fundamental to long-term sustainability (Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2014).

The COVID-19 crisis underscored CBT's inherent vulnerability to external shocks and the imperative of building resilience (Hall et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2021). Communities with diversified income sources, strong social capital, and robust support from government and external networks demonstrated greater capacity to withstand the crisis (Baum et al., 2020). The criticality of accessible welfare systems and financial support for micro-enterprises and communities became an urgent and undeniable necessity (Benjamin et al., 2020). This crisis also presented an opportunity to re-evaluate and enhance tourism models to be more sustainable and responsible (Higgins-Desbiolles, 2020).

Since the post-COVID-19 period, we have observed tourism's resurgence alongside several significant transformations. Digital transition has become an imperative, not merely an option, for CBT to survive and thrive in the post-pandemic world (Sigala, 2020; Kurniawati et al., 2025). The integration of sustainability with innovation, the incorporation of ESG principles, and alignment with the SDGs have become new quality benchmarks for CBT (Quynh, 2025). The growing trend towards quality-oriented and experiential tourism, which emphasizes depth and meaning over mere volume, offers CBT an opportunity to differentiate and create value (Sirichakkaraset et al., 2025).

Factors for CBT success can be summarized at multiple levels. At the community level, robust social capital, visionary leadership, adequate skills and knowledge, and multi-stakeholder participation are fundamental (Scheyvens, 2002; Kontogeorgopoulos et al., 2015). At the institutional level, enabling policy frameworks, inter-stakeholder collaboration, and accessible financial and technical support are crucial factors (Beeton, 2006; Jamal & Stronza, 2009). At the market level, market access, quality products and services, and effective marketing communication are key to business sustainability (Mitchell & Ashley, 2010).

Persistent challenges demand serious attention, including the complex issue of balancing growth and sustainability, which requires context-sensitive decision-making (Dodds & Butler,

2019). Equitable distribution of benefits within communities remains a significant challenge, particularly in socially and economically diverse communities (Blackstock, 2005). Addressing climate change adaptation has become a pressing concern for many CBT initiatives in vulnerable areas (Scott et al., 2019). The digital divide between technologically connected and unconnected communities risks creating new inequalities in opportunities and competitiveness. Finally, maintaining cultural diversity and authenticity while responding to tourism market demands represents a delicate balance requiring careful consideration (Salazar, 2012).

Opportunities and future trends for CBT are numerous and exciting. Leveraging emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data analytics, and Virtual/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) presents opportunities for developing novel tourist experiences and more efficient management (Kurniawati et al., 2025). The integration of CBT with the concept of Regenerative Tourism, which goes beyond sustainability by focusing on creating positive environmental and social impacts, represents a high-potential direction (Bellato & Pollock, 2025). Linking with the Economy of Well-being, which prioritizes quality of life and happiness over purely economic metrics, aligns perfectly with CBT's inherent philosophy. Opportunities arising from fostering domestic and international networks and collaborations to share lessons, exchange innovations, and offer mutual support will help unlock and elevate CBT's potential both nationally and globally in a sustainable manner (Jansuri et al., 2025).

Policy and practical recommendations can be stratified by stakeholder group. For governments, it is crucial to develop comprehensive, coherent, and implementable CBT policy frameworks, allocate sufficient budgets and resources, support the establishment of both physical and digital infrastructure, create accessible support mechanisms for small communities, and foster systematic inter-agency collaboration. For communities, continuous investment in capacity building and skill development is vital. They should also develop transparent and participatory governance systems, diversify income sources to mitigate risks, invest in digital technologies and marketing, and meticulously preserve the authenticity and cultural values that are CBT's core strengths. For academics and researchers, long-term research that tracks CBT's ongoing impacts is essential. They should conduct cross-regional and cross-cultural comparative studies using consistent conceptual frameworks, develop appropriate metrics and evaluation tools for CBT, and systematically assess the utilization of new technologies and innovations. Lastly, for the private sector and operators, it is imperative to support and collaborate with communities equitably, invest in developing high-quality products and services, adopt responsible marketing approaches that genuinely reflect CBT's values, and actively support community capacity-building and skill enhancement.

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