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Rural Tourism and Rural Development in India

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Abstract

This paper focus to probe the of rural tourism in India, how rural tourism can help rural society. It can have both positive and negative impacts on rural as well as urban communities. rural tourism means Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural Tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 74% of the population resides in its 7 million villages. Across the world the trends of industrialization and development have had an urban centric approach. Alongside, the stresses of urban lifestyles have led to a “counter-urbanization” syndrome. This has led to growing interest in the rural areas. Promotion of village tourism as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits to rural and its new geographic regions. Key geographic regions would be identified for development and promotion of Rural Tourism.

Keywords: Rural tourism Product, Rural development

Introduction

Tourism is not only a growth engine but also an employment generator. According to the Economic Survey 2011-12, the sector has the capacity to create large scale employment both direct and indirect, for diverse sections in society, from the most specialized to unskilled workforce. It provides 6-7 per cent of the world’s total jobs directly and millions more indirectly through the multiplier effect as per the UN’s World Tourism Organization(UNWTO).The importance of tourism as a creator of job opportunities can be understood from the fact that in India every one million invested in tourism creates 47.5 jobs directly and around 85-90 jobs indirectly. In comparison, agriculture creates only 44.6 jobs and manufacturing a mere 12.6 jobs. Moreover tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems and jewellery and readymade garments.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs)

During 2011 FTAs in India were 6.31 million with a growth of 9.2% over 2010. FTAs during 2012 were 6.65 (provisional) million with a growth of 5.4%, as compared to the FTAs of 6.31 million during 2011.

Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) from Tourism

Tourism is an important sector of Indian economy and contributes substantially in the country’s Foreign Exchange Earnings. FEEs from tourism, in rupee terms, during 2011 was Rs.77,591 crore (provisional), with a growth of 19.6%, as compared to the FEEs of Rs.64,889 crore (provisional) during 2010. During 2012, the Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs)

from tourism registered a growth of 21.8% from Rs.77,591 to Rs.94,487 crore (provisional) when compared to FEEs during 2011.

Rural Tourism in India

Rural tourism means any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism. Rural Tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. As against conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events and is based on preservation of culture, heritage and traditions.

The trend of urbanization has led to falling income levels, lesser job opportunities in the total areas leading to an urbanization syndrome in the rural areas. Rural Tourism is one of the few activities which can provide a solution to these problems. Besides, there are other factors which are shifting the trend towards rural tourism like increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture and improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness. In the developed countries, this has resulted in a new style of tourism of visiting village settings to experience and live a relaxed and healthy lifestyle. This concept has taken the shape of a formal kind of Rural Tourism. Under this Scheme, thrust will be to promote village tourism as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits to rural and its new geographic regions. Key geographic regions would be identified for development and promotion of Rural Tourism. The implementation would be done through a Convergence Committee headed by the District Collector. Activities like improving the environment, hygiene, infrastructure etc. would be eligible for assistance. Apart from providing financial assistance the focus would be to tap the resources available under different schemes of Deptt. Of Rural Development, State Govts. and other concerned Departments of the Govt. of India.

Rural Tourism Sites in India

Rural tourism is gaining importance in Indian tourism with its economic and social benefits. It is estimated that Rs.4, 300 crore additional revenue can be generated through Rural tourism. It is going to play a vital role in bridging the gap between Rural and Urban India by balancing urbanization and counter urbanization syndromes.

The government, of late, has realized what the rural India can offer to the world. The Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) has notified Tourism as one of the major sources for generating employment and promoting sustainable livelihoods. The Union ministry of tourism in collaboration with UNDP has launched the Endogenous Tourism Project in the year 2004, linked to the existing rural tourism scheme of the government. The UNDP has committed \$ 2.5 million for the project. UNDP will help in areas of capacity building, involvement of NGOs, local communities and artisans forge strong community-private and public sector partnerships. The government has decided to develop necessary infrastructure for facilitating rural tourism.

Table -1**List of Commissioned Rural Tourism Sites of Ministry of Tourism**

Sr No	Name of Rural Site	District	State	USP of site
1	Pochampalli	Nalgonda	Andhra Pradesh	Cotton & Silk Sarees
2	Konaseema	East Godavari	Andhra Pradesh	Eco-tourism (Coastal Development)
3	Puttaparthi	Ananthpur	Andhra Pradesh	Culture (Spiritual life)
4	Chinchinada	East Godavari	Andhra Pradesh	Eco-tourism (Coast development)
5	Rengo	East Siang	Arunachal Pradesh	Culture and Bamboo Cane handicraft
6	Ligu	Upper Subansiri	Arunachal Pradesh	Culture
7	Ego-Nikte	West Siang	Arunachal Pradesh	Culture
8	Dehing-Patakai Kshetra	Tinsukia	Assam	Culture and Eco-tourism
9	Heritage village at Tera	Kachch	Gujarat	Heritage
10	Hodka	Kachchh	Gujarat	Mirror work/ Embroidery
11	Navagaon and Malegaon	Dang	Gujarat	Culture & Eco-tourism
12	Nagar	Kullu	Himachal Pradesh	Topi and Shawl weaving
13	Paragpur	Kangra Valley	Himachal Pradesh	Himachal Heritage
14	Baroh	Kangra	Himachal Pradesh	Gurukul Culture
15	Akingaam	Anantnag	Jammu & Kashmir	Culture (Folk Dance :Bhand Pathar)
16	Kokkare Bellur	Bellur	Karnataka	Eco-tourism
17	Attiveri Bird Sanctuary	Uttar Kannada	Karnataka	Eco-tourism
18	Banavasi	Uttar Kannada	Karnataka	Stone machinery, Wood Carving and Musical instruments
19	Anegundi	Koppal	Karnataka	Banana Fibre Craft
20	Chaugan	Mandla	Madhya Pradesh	Lantana Craft
21	Pranpur	Ashoknagar	Madhya Pradesh	Chanderi Sarees
22	Orchha	Tikamgarh	Madhya Pradesh	Historical and Adventure (River rafting)
23	Seondha	Datia	Madhya Pradesh	Wood and stone craft
24	Budhni	Sehore	Madhya Pradesh	Historical, Spiritual and Wood craft
25	Morachi Chincholi	Pune	Maharashtra	Sufi tradition and Culture
26	Mopunchuket	Mokokchung	Nagaland	Shawl weaving
27	Avachekha	Zunheboto	Nagaland	Tribal Culture
28	Changtongia	Mokokchung	Nagaland	Tribal Culture
29	Leshumi	Phek	Nagaland	Tribal Culture and Adventure
30	Thetsumi	Phek	Nagaland	Tribal Culture
31	Longsa	Mokokchung	Nagaland	Tribal Culture
32	Mitikhru	Phek	Nagaland	Art & Craft (Woodcraft), Handloom
33	Chungli Yimti	Tuensang	Nagaland	Historical & Tribal Culture

Sr No	Name of Rural Site	District	State	USP of site
34	Raghurajpur	Puri	Orissa	Stone Craft and Pattachitra
35	Samode	Jaipur	Rajasthan	Lac Work, Paper painting, Gems stone painting
36	Lachen	North Sikkim	Sikkim	Rugs and Carpet
37	Tingchim	West Sikkim	Sikkim	Trekking and bird watching
38	Kazhugumalai	Thoothukudi	Tamil Nadu	Spiritual and Pottery making
39	Theerthamalai	Dharmapuri	Tamil Nadu	Historical
40	Devipattinam Navbhashnam	Ramnathpuram	Tamil Nadu	Stone Carving
41	Thirukurugudi	Tirunelveli	Tamil Nadu	Historical
42	Kombai (Kurangani)	Theni	Tamil Nadu	Spice
43	Kamalasagar	West Tripura	Tripura	Historical
44	Jageshwar	Almora	Uttarakhand	Spiritual
45	Mana	Chamoli	Uttarakhand	Trekking Adventure
46	Adi Kailash	Nainital	Uttarakhand	Adventure
47	Padmapuri	Nainital	Uttarakhand	Adventure
48	Nanakmatta	Udham Singh Nagar	Uttarakhand	Spiritual
49	Mukhrai	Mathura	Uttar Pradesh	Folk Dance
50	Ballabhpur Danga	Birbhum	West Bengal	Folk Dance
51	Mukutmonipur	Bankura	West Bengal	Sari weaving
52	Kamarpukur	Hooghly	West Bengal	Spiritual & Craft

Source:-Ministry of Tourism Annual Reports 2011-12

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Objectives of the study

- 1.To analyse Rural tourism products in India
- 2.To evaluate Rural Tourism for Rural development
- 3.To providing suggestion for improvement of Rural tourism In India

Rural Tourism for Rural development in India

Why has Rural Tourism Grown?

Tourism generating regions for rural tourism are highly developed and urbanized – the stresses of urban living and the remoteness from the natural environment has created a desire for escape from the monoculture of city living. Rural locations offer an idealized release from stress and the opportunity to re-engage with a simpler, quieter way of life that offers rest and relaxation.

Demand fuelled by media, over-familiarity and congestion with traditional tourist resorts and increased interest in alternative attractions – with its voracious appetite for content and the resultant over-exposure of many traditional tourist destinations, the media have sought out new and interesting tourism experiences for their lifestyle productions.

Increasing environmental awareness and interest in the relationship between humans and the environment. Green issues have raised the attractiveness of rural experiences as ecologically sustainable tourism.

Transport, communications, and the removal of political and economic barriers to travel have facilitated accessibility of rural areas. Increasing numbers of Free Independent Travelers and world-wide long-haul travel – many more travelers are FIT than in the past due to the increased capacity, especially in long-haul transport modes. When combined with increasing discretionary incomes, greater awareness of the range of experiences on offer, and

greater mobility through private transport, the accessibility and attractiveness of rural destinations has been dramatically improved.

A move toward short-break holidays - income and leisure time have changed so that shorter breaks with greater choice of leisure activities are sought. Changing work patterns have increased the popularity of shorter breaks that minimize the absence from work and the effect of absences on work flow and involvement.

Better-educated travelers have increased interest in outdoor recreation, eco-tourism and special interest tourism - individualism drives a need for unique experiences and rural tourism, because of its fragmented nature and diversity of offerings, can satisfy this need.

An increased interest in heritage can be satisfied through rural tourism as rural areas are often the repositories of remnant heritage.

Rural areas are perceived as healthier, offering fresher air, cleaner water and the opportunity for outdoor recreation. Rural areas offer fresh, and sometimes, specialty foods.

An increasing desire for authentic experiences including interaction with local people - Rural tourism is REAL (Rewarding, Enriches the spirit, provides Adventure and Learning); authenticity is believed to be found in genuine country experiences and lifestyles.

What Can Rural Tourism Contribute to Rural Development

Rural tourism, while still only a minority tourism market, is making a valuable contribution to rural economies. Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms, but also in terms of jobs, contributions towards funding conservation, encouragement to the adoption of new working practices, and the injection of a new vitality into sometimes weakened economies. Potentially rural tourism promises some of the following benefits to rural development:

Job retention

Rural tourism cash flows can assist job retention in services such as retailing, transport, hospitality and medical care. It can also provide additional income for farmers, and, in some cases, for foresters and fisherman. Job retention is not as politically glamorous as job creation, but, by helping the viability of small communities, it is critical to the survival of marginal areas. Studies of rural Austria, Sweden and Ireland have documented the role of tourism in job retention.

Job creation

Job creation typically occurs in the hotel and catering trades, but can also take place in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage interpretation. Studies in Britain suggest that job creation varies by enterprise type. Farmhouse accommodation and bed-and-breakfast can create up to 23 jobs per £ 100 000 of tourism revenue. Job creation effects are less marked in hotels and caravan/campsites, yielding approximately six jobs per £ 100 000 of revenue.

New Business Opportunities

Tourism generates new opportunities for industry. Even those rural businesses not directly involved in tourism can benefit from tourist activity through developing close relationships with tourist facilities where local foods can be used as part of the tourism offering in a locality. Rural tourism facilitates expansion of complementary businesses such as service stations and new businesses are created to cater to tourist needs for hospitality services, recreational activities and arts/crafts.

Opportunities for Youth

The tourism industry is often promoted as an exciting and growing industry suited to the energies and enthusiasm of young people. Career options are enhanced with the opportunities for training and direct involvement in running tourism businesses, especially those within small communities.

Service retention

Visitor information services can be provided by existing outlets, such as shops, thus increasing **income** flows if payment is made for acting as information outlets. Services can also benefit by **the** additional customers which visitors provide. Finally, tourism's importance to national **economies** can strengthen the political case for subsidies to help retain services.

Community diversification

Community diversification is an important activity in many upland and climatically marginal regions. Forest regions have suffered serious socio-economic problems in recent years, partly because of the mechanization of tree felling and processing, and partly because of falling prices following reduced timber demand. Rural tourism can assist forestry by diversifying income sources for forest communities if the special qualities of the forest environment for recreational use are realized and developed.

Rural Tourism Enhances and Revitalizes Community Pride

Tourism encourages conformity to an ideal image of community which can result in growth of personal ties and community solidarity. Thus the basis for community solidarity shifts from shared cultural background to shared image²³. Amenities play a fundamental role in shaping a community's identity and pride and so the potential of tourism for improvements to facilities and amenities has positive implications for community pride, particularly rural museums as an important repository of rural culture.

Preservation of Rural Culture and Heritage

In rural tourism the 'sense of place' is a fundamental element in both the tourists' and host community's feelings of what makes the area attractive to visit and live in. This sense of place is maintained partly through rural museums which play a vital role in preserving heritage

Increase arts and crafts sale

Arts and crafts have a special place in the cultural heritage of regions and nations. Many commentators have noted that tourism can assist arts and crafts, both by recognizing their importance, and by purchasing craft products. Income flows from these activities are well documented. Support between the arts and tourism can be a two-way process. Many communities now use arts and crafts festivals as a marketing mechanism to encourage visitors to come to their areas.

Landscape conservation

Landscape conservation has become an increasingly important form of heritage protection. Landscape is of crucial importance to rural tourism but, equally, visitor use is vital to the landscape conservation industry. Visitor use brings political benefits, can bring economic gains, and can provide jobs in maintaining and repairing traditional landscapes worn by recreational activities.

Environmental improvements

Environmental improvements such as village paving and traffic regulation schemes, sewage and litter disposal can be assisted by tourism revenues and political pressures from tourism authorities. These help develop pride of place, important in retaining existing population and businesses, and in attracting new enterprises and families.

Suggestion for improvement of Rural tourism in India

Plan for sustainable growth of rural tourism

Develop rural tourism protecting natural resources, local heritage and lifestyles.

Promote traditional tourism products

Improvement of the surroundings of the village. This would include activities like landscaping, development of parks, fencing, compound wall etc.

Improvements to roads within the Panchayat limits. This shall not include any major road which connects the village.

Illumination in the village.

Providing for improvement in solid waste management and sewerage Management.

Construction of Wayside amenities.

Procurement of equipments directly related to tourism, like Water Sports, Adventure Sports, Eco-friendly modes of transport for moving within the tourism zone.

Refurbishment of the Monuments.

Signages

Reception

Other work/activities directly related to tourism

Tourist Accommodation

Conclusions

If a proper marketing plan is done for rural tourism, it could bring lots of benefit to our society. It could be a sustainable revenue generating project for rural development of our government. It can help inflow to resources from urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban. Both short-term and long-term planning, implementing and monitoring are vital in avoiding damage to rural areas. Environmental management, local involvement, sound legislation, sustainable marketing, and realistic planning are crucial for development of rural tourism. Rural tourism will emerge as an important instrument for sustainable human development including poverty alleviation, employment generation, environmental regeneration and development of remote areas and advancement of women and other disadvantaged groups in the country apart from promoting social integration and international understanding. It can help inflow to resources from urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban. Both short-term and long-term planning, implementing and monitoring are vital in avoiding damage to rural areas.

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