



ROLE OF TRANSPORT AND TOURISM INDUSTRY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND ABROAD

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ABSTRACT:

Today, tourism is major source of income for many countries. Tourism is an important feature of the rural economy as the top tourism destinations, particularly in developing countries, include national parks, wilderness areas, mountains, lakes and cultural sites, most of which are generally rural.

The concept of rural tourism is so vast that it's very difficult to give an exact definition to it. Every individual or organization may define rural tourism differently. In simple words, rural tourism is a form of nature-based tourism that covers the rural life as well as culture, art and heritage at rural locations which result in favoring the local communities economically and socially.

The aim of this research paper is to find out the advent of awareness, opportunities and sustainability of rural tourism. Any successful tourism development, whether pro-poor or not, depends on commercial, economic, political and logistical issues such as the quality of product, accessibility and infrastructure of the destinations, policy co-ordination etc.

KEYWORDS: Rural Tourism, Sustainable Development, Rural Economy, Social Indicators, Rural Development Policy, Local Economic Development.

INTRODUCTION:

It is well established that, tourism fosters economic growth in terms of employment and income. It has potential for impacting regional development and can help to remove inequalities between different regions of the country specially lagging regions like the North East.

Balanced development of the countryside can be seen as a long-term improvement of living conditions of the country but according to the imperatives of economic, environmental, social and cultural self-respect due to population.

By ensuring the practice of tourism in villages seeks to stop labor and return migration from urban to areas of origin, increasing the stability of active population, improve living conditions, protect and conserve the environment as a factor of recreation and rehabilitation creative potential of the individual, creating conditions for carrying out other economic activities, industrial, commercial, rural areas.



Besides the positive economic and social impacts in the rural areas, tourism in recent years has considered as a source for the reconstruction and sustainable development in rural areas.

OBJECTIVES OF RESEARCH STUDY:

The present research study is carried out with following objectives:

1. To study the importance & challenges of tourism in rural areas.
2. To study the overview of India's Tourist Sector in last decade.
3. To give some suggestions for developing tourism industry in the rural areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The Secondary Data is collected from various reference books related to Rural Tourism, Sustainable Development, Rural Economy, Social Indicators, Rural Development Policy, Local Economic Development, Commerce & Management, and Marketing & Finance etc. For said research study secondary data is also collected from the National and International Research Journals which are related to Commerce, Management, Marketing, Finance, and Tourism.

For the present research study the data pertaining to the above objectives was collected and reviewed the literature on the topic concerned. The literature was thus collected by visiting various libraries. The secondary data is also collected from various websites.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

The said research study is carried out with the following hypothesis in view:

- H-1** In recent times, Rural Tourism Sector forms an important component of the Indian Economy.
- H-2** Now days, rural tourism focuses on actively participating in a rural lifestyle.

IMPORTANCE OF TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS

1. **Boosts the rural economy:** Rural Tourism increases the influx of travelers since these offbeat places offer a beautiful and relaxing ambiance. This thereby enhances the economic growth of remote rural regions. This ensures stable income to the local community through various aspects - employment, entrepreneurship, or investment. Locals including women and youth get the chance to involve themselves in entrepreneurial activities that not only enable their skills and knowledge but also generate a sustainable means of income for the community. This decreases the migration of the population due to a lack of employment opportunities in their native place enabling the community's wellbeing.
2. **Increase participation of the poor in the development of tourism** - While the percentage of poor people in urban areas is increasing, there are still more in rural areas, both in total numbers as well as a proportion of the population. One key opportunity of involving more of the poor in tourism is to develop tourism enterprises where they live. This is not to say that the poor will necessarily own an enterprise, or even provide the labor, just because it is located in a rural area, but



location is a first step. Furthermore, two strengths of tourism for increasing participation are that a) because the customer comes to the product, there are more opportunities for expanding the range of transactions; and b) tourism usually involves a wide range of enterprises, i.e. the small and informal as well as the well-established or multi-national.

3. **Bring wider benefits to rural areas** - Rural areas generally suffer high levels of poverty, and are also characterized by lower levels of non-farm economic activity, infrastructural development, and access to essential services. They may also suffer from depopulation of the able-bodied, and lack of political clout. The development of tourism can help address several of these problems through:
 - i. Economic growth, economic diversification and stabilization;
 - ii. Employment creation, as primary source of income but most importantly secondary source of income;
 - iii. Reduced out-migration and possibly re-population;
 - iv. Maintenance and improvement of public services;
 - v. Infrastructural improvements;
 - vi. Revitalizing crafts, customs and cultural identities;
 - vii. Increasing opportunities for social contact and exchange;
 - viii. Protection and improvement of both the natural and built environment;
 - ix. Increasing recognition of rural priorities and potential by policy-makers and economic planners.
4. **One option among few** - Manufacturing industry gravitates to areas with good transport links, infrastructure, and commercial skills. Rural areas usually have few sources of comparative advantage for attracting economic activity other than agriculture or industries based on harvesting natural resources. Tourism is one of the few sectors that can be suitable to remote or non-urban areas, provided that there is sufficient access for tourists. Because there are few other options, its value to the poor can be particularly high. People from their land and competition for other natural resources such as water, forest, and wildlife are likely to be the key trade-offs. Pro-poor strategies should therefore focus on minimizing negative impacts as well as exploiting potential benefits.
5. **Nature a pro-environment mindset** - The concept of Eco-tourism is essentially embedded in Rural Tourism. It has a greater goal of encouraging the preservation and protection of natural resources like rivers, forest lands, sacred groves, and mountains, as well as native flora and fauna, aquatic life, etc. Rural Tourism helps to develop a consciousness towards the biodiversity found in the rural areas. It helps to generate awareness among both the natives and the travelers and promotes the preservation and conservation of the natural environment and its inhabitants.

However, any assessment of the key features of successful tourism development and the key characteristics of rural areas leads to the hypothesis that developing tourism in rural areas faces major obstacles. Table 1 lists some of the requirements of tourism,



and shows how rural areas maybe less likely than urban areas to be able to meet most of them.

CHALLENGES OF TOURISM IN RURAL AREAS:

1. Where tourism is planned within a tourism ministry, or a tourism and wildlife ministry, the institutional mandate is likely to be in expanding the national tourism product, rather than the growth potential of poor areas. Thus the focus is more likely to be on attracting investment, developing the main destinations, marketing them, and often also on data gathering. If the policy objective is expansion of tourism investment and arrivals, particularly of international tourism, the fastest returns may come from a focus on existing resorts and urban areas, where tourists, assets and skills are concentrated. That said, there may be commercial reasons to invest in rural products, such as product diversification, or political pressure to expand economic impacts to poor areas.

2. Rural development planners and extension workers are unlikely to focus on tourism, which is entirely alien to their agriculturally-focused professional training.

3. Lack of communication between government departments, or inconsistencies between policies, that occur in the capital city can be greatly magnified in rural areas. Administrative boundaries, reporting structures and mandates can impede collaboration.

4. Rural areas may have little political priority across government offices, not just in the tourism ministry. Given the added costs of investment in rural areas, and the lower per person returns given lower population density, a policy to redistribute resources to rural areas is likely to require a strategic political choice.

5. Even if political will is sufficient, there are administrative challenges to making things happen in rural areas given lower population densities, poorer infrastructure, more junior government staff, lower levels of skills and commercial activity.

6. Lack of capital.

7. Lack of clear government legislation.

8. Low level skill development.

9. Lack of linkages between micro, small and medium enterprises.

10. Lack of business opportunity awareness and financial institutional support.

11. Lack of commitment by the public sector.

12. Corruption and mismanagement of key development institutions.

Rural Tourism: A Key Note

A) As advantages be highlighted -

1. A quality environment

2. A lovely setting

3. Envidable location

B) In point of inconvenience is to be noted -

1. Small population of law and fact

2. Weak social fabric

3. Need for the number of visitors is not very large



SUGGESTIONS:

Some suggestions to attract foreign tourists in India are given below:

1. Overseas publicity – Department of tourism and ITDC now participating in various tourism festivals in different countries all over the world to promote different tourism destinations in India. Simultaneously different states are also participating in these festivals in domestic and regional level to promote their states tourism.

2. Production of tourist literature – Different literatures should be published to advertise any particular destination. Different guide books, tour brochures, posters, folders need to be distributed to inform tourists about the countries reach tourism destinations.

3. Guide Training – Proper training programmes to be arranged for the guides and service providers to meet the need of foreign tourist. Guides should know different languages which will allow them to provide good service to the foreign tourists.

4. Collection of tourist statistics – Collection of tourist statistics and research of those statistics will help to find out the problems of foreign tourists and the ways to solve those problems.

5. Service under one roof – Coordination with air and train services with a view to facilitate both air and train journey and to make it comfortable in India. Such coordination will definitely help the tourists to get the best of the service. Such coordination is available in Europe which helps the tourist a lot.

6. Star Accommodations – India need more star category hotels in different destinations in the country. Presently one will find good accommodation mainly in cities but it also needs to be in the heart of the tourist destinations also.

7. Liaison with Govt. departments and private companies – There must be proper liaison between different Govt. departments responsible for providing facilities required by the tourists including information's in regard to commercial matters. Also there should be communications between the Govt. departments and travel agencies which would necessarily remain responsible for the detailed arrangements of tourists.

CONCLUSIONS:

Rural tourism is the main driver of economic growth/ employment generation in more than 80 countries. Also it really has much to offer to the tourist. It is sparsely populated, more outdoor activities, local involvement and mainly in a natural environment. It has the potential of addressing issues such as rural poverty, empowerment of women, strengthening the economic status of the rural artisans. To start a project in these areas, many challenges are faced by the committee. The major challenge is financial support, local participation, language barriers and trained manpower. To conquer these challenges, there are available opportunities which when chosen at the right time can be beneficial for the product.

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