

Rural Tourism in India: A Perspective

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Abstract:

The study provides an holistic view of the rural tourism in the context of India and elaborates its potential in generating employment and contribution in the national income with catching attention towards the areas that needs to be explored with cautious of preserving the cultural, innate, ethnic and environment values of the region. The study gives the glimpses of the tourism industry and potential of rural tourism that can be utilised for the development of rural region in general and the sites carrying the rural tourism in particular and focuses on the integration of different policies for the development of the rural tourism.

Key Words : Rural Tourism , Employment, Tourism Industry

Introduction :

Tourism is way to connect with the ideas, culture and feelings with the geographical, socio- ethnic beauty of the region in specific and surroundings in general. It's a two way process of exchange wherein the benefits primarily received by persons of in-situ sites and the tourist as persons of the place get a chance to interact with the culture of the other place and enrich the knowledge and exchange the ideas while get familiarity with the socio-cultural environment of the tourist. Besides this, it also provides large revenue and generates employment to the people of the region. Enhance the pace of the Development and a way also to get more investment to the regions. The concept of rural tourism shall not be associated with the landscapes and other cultural aspects but it has to be recognised as the place providing considerable relaxed and healthy environment may be marked with peace and heritage values including religious and ethnic values. Development strategy of the government of India comprises 5Ts—talent, tradition, talent, tradition, tourism, trade and

technology showing tourism is integral part of the development strategy of the govt of India.

Tourism is always seen as the part of the economy considered as the revenue generating and cultural connecting point with the international community. It always be treated as the source of revenue and Development in the economy in general and region in specific. The relevance of the Tourism is well defined as the sector contributed to a total of 10.2 percent of world GDP and creating 1 in 10 jobs in this planet and for India it is share in the employment is about 9.3 percent of total employment (WTTC). World Travel and Tourism Council has estimated that the industry has contributed 3.3 percent of Gross Domestic product of the India and is expected to rise by 6.7 percent in 2017, the share of the employment in total employment in 2017 was 9.3 percent (World Travel and Tourism Council, 2017). Significant contribution of tourism has converted the tourism from an activity to industry and India has also well recognises its potential and decided to explore its potential in fullest to the same for the sake of the

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development of the economy especially the rural areas.

Rural Tourism in India: History and Definition and prospects

The potential of tourism pushes the idea to draw the guidelines to promote the rural tourism to ripen the benefits associated with it. The objective of the tourism was first drafted and presented in parliament in 1982 and formulated as policy document in 2002. The government of India drafted the Tourism act in 2002 to harness its direct and multiplier effects on employment and poverty eradication in environment sustainable manner with participations of panchyats, local bodies and associations, so that the presence of India's unique cultural and spiritual heritage should be felt by the rest of the world including the world Tourism Organisation, Tourism Organisation Travel Council and Earth Council. The Policy recognises seven key areas to promote the tourism in the country. These are- swagat (Welcome) soochana (Information), Suvidha (facilities), SURAKSHA (SAFETY) SAHYOG (CO-OPERATION), samrachna (Infrastructure), and safai (cleanliness). The guidelines emphasis on the eco-tourism which should be more private driven and welfare oriented in the government framework. The vision documents fix the goal to put the tourism as the major source of the engine of the growth. The document also recognises the rural tourism as the one of the key area where the country can leverage the huge potential of its urban population.

Ministry of Tourism defines the Rural tourism as “ 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”.

Most of the attracting areas of the rural tourism are as under:

- Handicrafts / wood craft / cane craft / handlooms
- Coastal developments
- Spiritual life
- Cultural (tribal/ethnic/Dance etc)
- Weaving (silk/tussar/dari/topi.shawaletc)
- Natural heritage (water falls/hills etc)
- Historical sites
- Adventure (Treking)
- Stone machinery, wood carving, and Musical instruments
- Spices villages
- Fishing/farming
- Religious

Ministry of Tourism has identified total 172 sites across the country suitable for the Rural tourism which are known and have been selected by the Ministry of Tourism because of the some speciality. Ministry of Tourism also invites the proposals from the state/UTs to identify the village for the promotion of rural tourism and provides assistance based on the merits of the proposals. Government of India also running various schemes and provides assistance to grow the tourism Industry. Few of these are- “Hunar se Rozgartak”, Capacity Building for Service Provider,

Rural tourism and Eco-sensitive Zone:

There are various areas which needed to be co-integrated for the development of the region integrating the rural perspective as well as the rural tourism contingent with the environment and tourism. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has already marked the sites around the national forest reserve/tiger reserve and other wild life sanctuary including bird sanctuary as Eco-sensitive Zone and restricted certain activities under prohibited category and kept

certain activities under regulatory category with promotion of certain activities. A good co-ordination to attach the peripheral rural areas of these regions gives multiple benefits of the region. The tourism with environment awareness is also the need of hour.

Discussion and issues:

Governments has done a lots of effort for the improvement of the tourism industry but still lots are required to do in the direction to exhaust the potential of the industry possessed. India still standing on the lower ladder of the ranking devised on the basis of the contribution made by the industry to the GDP among the in comparison with the neighbouring countries like Srilanka, Malaysia, Vietnam and Thailand. The Industry are burgeoning but the connectivity and information system along with the basic amenities are still an concerning issues in the rural areas to attract the tourist especially foreign travellers. Awareness among the local people with moral and ethical standard has to be built up with highest security arrangement to ensure secured feeling among the tourist is an important issue. The specific contribution of rural tourism in the development of the rural region as well as its contribution in the development of the rural economy and state/national economy is needs to be assessed. PPP models may be implemented to revitalise the marketing of the rural site deserves to be promoted for the tourism.

Government also has to emphasis on the long term tourism facilities and to promote backpackers tourist for the promotion of the development the rural region. (Scheyvens, 2002) Local participation in planning and management and in providing services and majority goods to tourist is important for ensuring the benefits of the tourism to the region in particular.

Rural tourism will not be effective not only controlling the out migration from rural to urban areas but also will be effective for removing the unemployment distress of the region. Promotion of rural tourism would also become efficient in reducing the persisting gap between rural and urban region in terms of facilities and need based infrastructure. It has been experienced in that the farmers can act as director and create different outlooks in the region for the tourist. Interesting encounters between western tourist and Indian rural community is well narrated in the work of the mark Griffiths (Momsen, 2014)

The rigidity and understanding of tourism official with the local communities is also needs attention to cater the possibilities of the tourism and effective planning of the region. Nonetheless, it would not be incorrect to say that with effective management and implementation of the policies for the development of the rural tourism, we would not only be able to attract foreign exchange a but also be able to boost the national economy.

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