

“Rural Tourism Opportunities and Issues - Indian Perspective”

Dr Ashok Shamrao Patil

Assistant Professor Department of Geography Rajarshi Shahu Arts and Commerce College, Rukadi
Dist. Kolhapur –Maharashtra-India.

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ABSTRACT- India is best destination for rural tourism since more than 70% population reside in rural areas and have a different lifestyle than the urban population. The rural people have advantage of natural and clean air, food grown at the farm and many other benefits which can not be obtained in cities. The cultural and other differences are also very much notable due to size of the villages and size of cities which are having certain influences of western world. We have to take maximum advantages of the such environment and make the financial growth of the rural population which will add to the growth of the country as a whole. This paper is a decent contribution in creating the awareness in increasing the rural tourism activities in the villages.

KEYWORDS - Rural, Tourism, Economic, Society, Tourist, Natural

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism focuses on actively participating in a rural lifestyle. It can be a variant of ecotourism. Many villages can facilitate tourism because many villagers are hospitable and eager to welcome (and sometime even host) visitors. Agriculture is becoming highly mechanized and therefore, requires less manual labor. This trend is causing economic pressure on some villages, which in turn causes young people to move to urban areas. There is however, a segment of the urban population that is interested in visiting the rural areas and understanding the lifestyle.

Tourism is one of the largest and most profitable industries in the world. It has significant impact on the society, including job creation, economic growth, and infrastructural development. The government can conduct separate activities to improve the infrastructure of the rural villages. Every year number of international arrivals were recorded in India. The tourism industry in India is a highly profitable industry with the country's foreign exchange earnings alone amounting to US\$ 27.7

billion. In the year 2019 The number of domestic tourist visits stood at close to 1.6 billion.



Source :-<https://www.google.com/search?q=rura>

In recent years, the government has formulated several policies to promote this sector, having realized its potential impact on the economy. A National Tourism Policy was conceived in 2002 with this goal in mind. At present, numerous forms of tourism, categorized under “niche the government of India accorded it a priority sector status. So, what exactly is rural tourism? What is its relevance in the Indian context? What will be its implications on the social and economic spheres of development?

RURAL TOURISM IN BRIEF

For the tourist living a urban area lifestyle, the pastoral life of rural areas is an unfamiliar concept. The rustic charm, therefore, becomes a tourist attraction. Rural Tourism refers to the tourism that takes tourists to experience “the actual culture” of a rural setting. India's Ministry of Tourism defines **it 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.** Its characteristics include portrayal of the native arts and heritage in their natural habitat (rural areas),

experiencing the local culture through direct involvement with the residents of the villages. Rural tourism can include one or many of the multiple facets including farm tourism, cultural tourism, adventure tourism, nature tourism, and eco-tourism. Thus, rural tourism, through its myriad offerings of the traditional arts and culture, offers the tourists a break from their hectic, fast-paced life enslaved by modern technologies and urban ways of living. It is a “vacation” offering a one-of-a-kind learning experience to the travellers.

OPPORTUNITIES OF RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA

Rural tourism allows the creation of a replacement source of income in the non-agricultural sector for rural dwellers. The added income from rural tourism can contribute to the revival of lost folk art and handicrafts.

The main activity in India can be made rural tourism. The soul of India resides in its villages. Even in the 21st century world of technological advancements, India is a country whose economy is governed primarily by rural occupation. Two-thirds of its population lives in rural areas.

The main opportunity is financial growth of the villagers which is required for the developing country like India. The plan to make this a successful is depending on the participation from all the stakeholders.



Source:-<https://www.travindy.com/2001/native->

The country is home to more than 600,000 villages spanning different regions, each having its own set of customs and heritage. The tourism sector can benefit immensely by highlighting the rich cultural legacy of such areas.

India's various places of interest and demographic diversity is supplemented by its geographic diversity. From the frigid, snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas in the North to the sandy coasts of the southern peninsula, from the verdant hills of the North-East to the scalding desert in the

west, the country is home to a large variety of landscapes.



Source:- <https://broganabroad.com/rur>

Even in the absence of a proper policy on promoting the rich heritage of Indian towns and villages, curious visitors have thronged to such places to learn about the local customs and experience the native lifestyles. Rajasthan and Gujarat have been the frontrunners in this domain. The traditional arts & crafts of India combined with the simple, tranquil life in its rural areas lure tourists from around the globe. Vacationers are attracted to places where they can break free from their daily routine and experience a new way of life which reinvigorates them to cope with their mundane lives. India, with its diverse population, geography, and traditions is one of the best places for such seekers of change.

Benefits & Issues of Rural Tourism — with respect to Indian Perspective

The benefits and drawbacks of rural tourism can be classified with respect to the stakeholders as follows.

Benefits: For Villagers :

Infrastructural Development —

A tourist destination needs to be attractive to the potential visitors; they must have the basic amenities in the form of rest houses, electricity & water supply, sanitation, and sewerage facilities. The accessibility of these areas will also need improvement. Developing rural areas as tourist destinations will result in the holistic development of their infrastructure. The allure of economic benefits will drive the authorities to develop these areas at a faster pace.

Interaction with the outside world — Presently, rural areas are considered remote areas with minimal connectivity and interaction — the residents interact with visitors from nearby regions. With the onset of rural tourism, people from diverse geographical and educational backgrounds will visit these

underdeveloped areas, interact with the locals, enhancing their knowledge and skills.

Skill Development & Job Creation — As the concept gains popularity, large number of tourists will throng rural areas, the local arts and crafts will be appreciated to a larger extent. Also, the residents will have to be trained in skills relevant to the hospitality and tourism industry; new job profiles will emerge such as guides, event planners, accommodation managers, caterers, etc.

Rural Economy Development — As these areas will witness arrival of tourists, the economic condition of rural areas will improve. With the emergence of new hotels / B&Bs, increased sale of local arts and crafts, and requirement of means of transport, the income of the resident population will undergo immense growth.

Improvement in Quality of Life — The combined effect of the individual benefits will result in a much better quality of life for residents.

For Tourists:

Experience a different lifestyle — Tourists, who spend most of their lives in urban areas, will get the opportunity to break free from the frantic atmosphere of cities, and experience the tranquil atmosphere of villages.

Experience the Nature — In due course of time, urban areas have drifted away from nature; rural areas, on the other hand, develop in symbiosis with nature.

The Challenge of Rural Tourism in brief :

Adapting to the pastoral way of living — How convenient would it be for the visitors to adapt to the pastoral life in villages? The balance between retaining the village infrastructure and developing facilities for the convenience of the tourists needs to be considered.

Pressure on Natural Resources — As more tourists visit these areas, there will be greater consumption of food and water, thereby increasing

Waste Management — The amount of waste generated will increase with an increase in the visiting population. Waste generation and its consequences, such as plastic pollution, need to be kept in check.

Adaptability of native population — The resident population, which is not averse with the urban culture, especially of people from foreign lands, might face difficulty in accepting their new visitors. The authorities will have to intervene through regulations to not disturb the culture of the native population.

Environmental Quality — As waste generation and pressure on natural resources increases, the environmental quality would tend to deteriorate.

Maintaining harmony with the environment will be a major challenge; failure to do so might prove fatal to the endemic flora and fauna. so far 51 locations have been identified and commissioned as Rural Tourism sites by the Ministry of Tourism, 36 of which have been develop



Source

:<https://www.google.com/search?q=rural+tourism+maharashtra>

II. CONCLUSION

The Paper is a most useful in case of creating the awareness about the rural tourism amongst the stakeholders of this sector. The proper planning and making best efforts by the state government , central government and villagers will only make this sector more attractive to the tourist around the world. The issues of rural tourism can be sort out and make the people positive in creating the required facilities for the tourist visiting the villages, we have to see that language does not become the barrier among the tourist and local people. Separate classes can be conducted to overcome the barrier of the language of the tourist and local people. More funds are to be allocated for such dedicated activities . The future study can be conducted using actual data of the rural tourism status and activities to be conducted during the visit of the tourist in villages. India has great scope in this sector and should make good efforts are all the levels.

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