

Development of Rural Tourism: A Ray of Hope for Rural India

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ABSTRACT

The era of rural tourism is not very old for the country, but there is no doubt that it is now growing at a fast pace. Tourism as an industry is anyway at the top of the priority list for the country and various state governments as it contributes a lot to the country's economy and employment. Rural tourism is a very simple and powerful means of connecting the people of the village with the outside world. There can be no better medium than rural tourism to spread the cultural heritage of a country. When urban and foreign tourists visit villages, they bring with them impressions of different civilizations and cultures, thoughts and attitudes. Due to coming in contact with them, not only the socio-cultural scope of the villagers expands, but the tourists also return with the effect of folk language, folk culture, living and thinking of that place.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of rural tourism is broad and its scope is very wide, within which many types of tourism are included. By the way, there are many forms of rural tourism, in which the first farm tourism means that form of rural tourism in which tourists are made to experience the methods of farming and second, rural tourism means that system in which tourists experience rural life closely. Huh; Mainly included. But it also has many types of themes. Agricultural tourism is also a branch of rural tourism. Therefore, we can say that now the scope of rural tourism is more complex, effective and wider than the tourism of hill stations and centers of religious and cultural importance. Unlike traditional tourism, rural tourism has certain characteristics, such as it is experiential. On this side, the population of tourist places is less, it usually happens in natural environment. It includes local events and is based on the preservation of cultural heritage and traditions. It is implemented by the Tourism Committee headed by the Collector of

the district in which the concerned rural tourist destination is located.

Main article:

Any form of tourism that brings out the beauty of rural life and culture and that benefits the local community economically and socially, has been chosen to be developed. Tourists coming in contact with people and returning enriched with a pleasant experience can be called rural tourism. When we talk about rural tourism, we are actually talking about place and environment. Because apart from these two, in terms of arrangement and management, rural tourism has to take care of the convenience and happiness of tourists just like cities. For this, the basic infrastructure has to be developed for a healthy and comfortable life in the village which becomes the center of rural tourism. To reach there, good roads have to be prepared. Pure drinking water and electricity supply have to be ensured. In connection with the preparation of these arrangements, not only the village which becomes the center of tourism, but also the whole land lying in between from the nearest big city to it is benefited. Due to the construction of good roads that area connects directly to the cities and due to the better supply of electricity many small industries also develop.

The concept of rural tourism in India was first introduced in the National Tourism Policy 2002. In this, the idea of encouraging 'Agro Rural Tourism' was given. The policy defines 'rural tourism' as "a form of tourism that showcases rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural sites, brings economic and social benefits to the local community and provides enjoyable tourism." For experiences that help in exchange of ideas between tourists and local people, it can be called rural tourism. Along with this, the then Planning Commission also gave a prominent place to rural tourism in the six areas identified for the promotion of tourism in the ninth five-year plan. In order to put this concept on the ground, in 2002, the

government made a rural tourism scheme, under which emphasis was laid on developing basic facilities in rural areas. It was later implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) as a pilot project 'Edogenic Tourism Project'. The Tenth Five Year Plan saw the beginning of developing rural tourism projects in Assam, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Orissa, Tripura and Uttaranchal with special emphasis on rural tourism. Altogether about 80 such rural tourism projects were taken up during this five-year plan period. The government also provided Rs 50 lakh for each project. Seeing no significant progress in this direction in the Eleventh Five Year Plan, the government made a comprehensive change in its policy regarding rural tourism. Earlier, where the focus was on one village, during the 12th Five Year Plan, a strategy was prepared to develop Rural Tourism Clusters (RTCs) of five-six villages. According to the then Planning Commission, the cost of developing a rural tourism cluster of six villages would be around Rs 11 crore. In this way, relatively less amount of money will be spent on making rural tourism clusters.

UNDP provides a grant of Rs 20 lakh to each SWAL to develop the software i.e. between local people and outside agencies while the Ministry of Tourism contributes Rs 50 lakh as central financial assistance for the development of hardware at each site. Under this, infrastructure development activities like development of roads, cleanliness, improvement of village environment are done, along with hotel management institutions to give information about food, cleanliness and health to the rural people. Agreements are made with Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) and Virasat Vastu Shastris are engaged as consultants. Efforts are made to retain the vernacular architecture without much alteration of the surroundings.

India's National Tourism Policy 2002 has identified rural tourism as a special focus area. Endogenous Tourism Projects - Rural Tourism Scheme (TOP-RTS) is a joint effort of the Government of India and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) which started in 2003. Till March 31, 2012, the Ministry of Tourism had identified 105 tourist destinations for different States/UTs. According to the data available on the website of the Ministry, 52 rural tourist places have started working for the tourists in the whole country. Each of these places has its own

specialty. In 2014, in the Ministry of Tourism, the government's program named Swadesh Darshan was started, the purpose of which was to develop tourism based on a single topic. A tourist route is called a route that has at least three major places important for tourists. Be situated in different villages, towns or cities. Tourists based on any bus theme related to religion, culture or ethnic identity get promoted. The circuit is supported by theme ie theme-based tourism. The Rural Circuit is one of the 13 theme-based circuits that have been selected to be developed.

Under the plan for the development of rural tourism, the main and to develop it as the main tourism activity is to develop tourism and its socio-economic, so that tourism and migration of people from rural areas to cities stop. Local education through rural entertainment circles.

Benefits of tourism to rural economy:

Decreasing income levels in agriculture have shown symptoms of the disease of urbanization in rural areas. Along with this the pressures of urban lifestyle are showing signs of counter-urbanisation. Rural tourism is one of the few activities that can solve this problem. But 100% employment cannot be expected throughout the year with the help of tourism alone. Nevertheless, it provides an alternative opportunity and gives opportunities to do something other than farming and animal husbandry etc. in rural areas.

Along with tourism, new businesses and new jobs, rural tourism also develops new skills. It also creates elite capabilities like Information Technology (IT) and Hospitality among the villagers due to training and awareness. Due to this, the overall qualification of the society there increases and the scope of its livelihood increases. Also, the role of women in tourism-generated employment is equal to or in many places more than that of men. Apart from this, increasing the economic independence of women gives a lot of strength to their empowerment, while they also get social respect.

The tourism sector has a significant contribution in generating employment opportunities and earning foreign exchange in the Indian economy. The year-on-year increase in the number of foreign and domestic tourists is a testimony to this. In the year 2016, 8.8 million foreign tourists visited India, earning the country \$22.92 billion (Rs 1.54,146 crore) in foreign exchange. Less than two percent of the foreign exchange earned from tourism in the world comes to

India. There are many developed and developing countries of the world which are smaller than India on the basis of geographical area or population but a large number of foreign tourists go there. This is the reason why the government resorted to campaigns like 'Incredible India' to attract more and more foreign tourists. Along with this, emphasis has been laid on developing new forms of tourism like 'eco tourism', 'health tourism', 'heritage tourism' and rural tourism. Rural tourism is now slowly becoming popular as a result of government initiatives and private entrepreneurship.

When foreign tourists visit a village as tourists and are welcomed through folk dances with aarti, insistently made to sit in a row and fed, then those foreign tourists cherish that experience in their mind and become part of the country forever. Act as a cultural ambassador. Rural tourism, therefore, works in a two way manner in broadening the thinking and understanding. The marginal importance of its economic benefits increases further in rural tourism because there people have limited means of increasing income. This effect is seen in the most important employment sector as many jobs related to the service sector are created in it. Also, it provides a great opportunity for rural entrepreneurs to set up their business with low investment. From creating a transport network to transport tourists from the city to the village that has become a tourist center, and arranging for their food, accommodation and entertainment, many small and big opportunities arise, where the villagers can increase their income by joining. Huh. Apart from these, capital, new ideas and new businessmen also come from outside, where large investment is needed, which creates employment opportunities.

The biggest attraction of rural tourism for the tourists is the rural life. A tourist wanting to see a potter at work in a village might not spend a penny for pottery being made at a motor mill. It takes a live demonstration of a potter's art to entice him. In the same way, the costumes, hairstyles, ornaments, etc. which reflect the cultural characteristics of different regions, which were slowly becoming extinct in the glow of modernity, being termed as a sign of vulgarity, are now suddenly coming alive. The whole of Rajasthan is replete with such examples, where the crumbling layers of cultural heritage have been re-glued by tourism and painted by the interests of tourists. An integral part of this cultural

preservation is the sense of pride in the villagers about their historical heritage, which makes their villageness more natural and attractive for tourists.

Apart from these, there are some benefits like environmental protection, which are less directly visible, but whose importance is considerable. To promote tourism in the villages, efforts are made to maintain the natural environment. Greenery and trees and plants are preserved and by establishing a forest, tourists are made to feel close to nature. All these efforts ultimately make a significant contribution towards environmental protection. Now let's take a look at some of the well-known centers of rural tourism present in the country and try to understand the benefits and effects discussed above in a practical sense.

Suggestion:

A large population may still live in the villages, but the means of livelihood for them are becoming limited. There is no doubt that it is not easy to make a living just by farming. Now, in such a situation, what should be done in such a way that villages can live in villages and good income can be arranged for the villagers. And this can be possible through rural tourism. It is to be noted that tourism provides direct and indirect employment opportunities on a large scale. Improvement is possible with better infrastructure and connectivity of rural India Running home stay and hospitality management training programs for tourists Such tourist centres should be close to specific and traditional tourist places Central-State government will have to work together with a proactive approach Adequate grant should be given to Gram Sabha for maintenance of infrastructure, increase in law and order and public facilities around tourist centres

Conclusion:

The search for a break from the crowded life of the cities and some solitude is attracting people towards the villages. India, full of rich cultural and natural diversity, has immense potential for 'rural tourism' but challenges are also no less. More than two-thirds of the country's population lives in about six and a half lakh villages. As difficult as it is to develop infrastructure facilities such as road, rail and air transport to reach remote rural areas, human resource development for this area is equally difficult. It is difficult to imagine the development of tourism in rural areas without skilled and trained human resources. Unfortunately, so far no significant efforts

have been made in this direction. Neither any policy document was prepared on what kind of human resource is required for rural tourism nor was any separate institute established for their skill training. The reality is that so far there has been a lack of policy and strategy with regard to human resource development for rural tourism.

This new branch of tourism, which is called rural tourism. Slowly making its special place. Not only for governments, but also for the private sector. In fact, rural tourism may appear to be just a branch of the tourism sector, but if its benefits are understood closely, its impact is much wider and deeper. The scope of rural tourism is much more complex, effective and comprehensive than the tourism of hill stations and centers of religious and cultural importance. Let us see why rural tourism can be an effective means of overall development not only in terms of increasing income but also economically and socially.

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