

Rural Tourism Development: A Tool for Development of Sustainable Livelihood for Rural Youth

¹Manju Gill,²Jaideep Kumar

¹Senior Manager,²Research Scholar

¹Livelihood Department,

¹Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, India

Abstract :Tourism is one of the oldest business activities in the world, around 2,000 years old. It started when wealthy citizens of ancient Rome, decided that they would rather spend their summers away from the city, took trips to the countryside and the coast. Tourism has been directly linked with, rural poverty reduction in developing countries. In recent years, it has, however, been criticised by rural developers for its lack of involvement of rural poor and for being too increasingly focused on tourism and outsiders, specifically. Rural tourism is a great concept and can be a constant source of income for the rural youth if it is combined with the concept of sustainability. This paper revolves around the concept, opportunities, challenges, and most importantly preliminary framework of “Rural Tourism Development as a tool of sustainable livelihood for rural youth”. Various inputs and directions are presented in this paper along with implementable practices for making it constant source of income and into sustainable tourism that brings positive impact on current and future generations.

IndexTerms–Rural Tourism, Sustainable Rural Tourism, Sustainable Livelihood, Sustainable Tourism Framework.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in India has been an important role player for sustainable development because of its strong forward and backward connections with other prominent sectors of the economy. Indian tourism sector is growing by leaps and bounds. India’s contribution to world tourism sector is increasing with greater pace. Tourist arrivals and foreign exchange earnings are increasing rapidly. Events as terrorist attack, tsunami and swine flu didn’t affect India's tourism industry. Around 10 million foreign tourists arrived in India in 2017, and if NRI numbers are included then there were 17 million arrivals in India. There are opportunities, threats, and challenges to continue this growth speed. However, the need is to review quality of service experienced by tourism in the respective region and its contribution towards state. In the case of opportunities, India has advantage of natural beauty, cheap labour, rich culture, different religions, festivals, heritage, ancient medical science ayurveda, Yoga therapy, forts, palaces, museums, rich history, wild life sanctuaries etc.

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. At the same time this 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.

One of the benefits of rural tourism is the generation of income for local communities. Such income can then be used by these communities towards the sustainability of their traditional activities, the promotion and conservation of their local arts and cultures, and the prevention of rural-urban migration. Local communities are benefiting from rural tourism in three aspects: Economic, environmental, and socio-cultural. Few benefits are as follows:

- Create employment especially for the rural youth.
- The price of the land will rise.
- The expenditure on housing will increase.
- Demand for other goods and services will increase.
- Improvement in the public services

Aim of the paper is to critically examine the role of key stakeholders in tourism, and develop a theoretical framework for assessment of key factors of sustainable rural tourism in order to create sustainable livelihoods.

Three stages of the tourism development are:

1. The search for the area suitable for tourism development;
2. The rapid development of tourism in this area,
3. The entrenchment of tourism in the area. Initially, tourism is developing slowly. When the suitable location is discovered and popularized, tourists start to invade this area, and the local community refuses other economic activities and begins to build the infrastructure for tourists and offer desirable services.

Methodology:

The present study is based on the secondary data published by various agencies and organizations. The present study makes use of data and information provided by, UNWTO, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Newspapers, Magazines, Books, Economic journals and Internet etc.

Cycle of Tourism:

If the tourism continues to evolve, it reaches the last stage of tourism development and becomes fully mature. When tourism becomes a regulated field of activity, significant changes in the social, cultural, and natural environment becomes inevitable.

The Richard Butler cyclic model includes 7 stages:



1. **Exploration.** Locality is discovered by the people who appreciate its beauty and culture.
2. **Inclusion.** Small, but steadily increasing flow of tourists tends to appear. Tourists encourage local businesses to start providing tourist services and sell goods to the travellers.
3. **Enlargement.** Dynamic growth period. The flow of tourists is rapidly increasing.
4. **Exacerbation.** The number of tourists is still growing. Marketing tools are used in order to prolong the tourist season in order to attract more tourists.

5. **Renewal.** In this phase of the cyclic model, the number of tourists is growing steadily but can quickly increase or decrease. At this stage, an opportunity to join or go to the next cycle is emerging.
6. **Stagnation.** The number of incoming tourists is stabilizing. This results in economic, social, political, and environmental problems. This stage can last for a short or very long period.
7. **The downturn.** If the site does not respond to the social, economic, political, or environmental problems, the number of tourists begins to decline sharply, as they prefer locations that are more attractive. It is important to mention that the cycle can begin again at regeneration phase if there have been significant changes in the resource bases.

The Concept of Rural Tourism:

The concept of rural tourism is multidimensional and there are several different definitions of it. The 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 and community oriented tourism 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. Few of the dimensions of rural tourism are as follows:

- Located in rural/country side areas;
- Rural in scale — both in terms of buildings and settlements — and, therefore, usually small scale;
- Traditional in character, growing slowly and organically, and connected with local families. It will often be very largely controlled locally and developed for the long term good of the area;
- Sustainable — in the sense that its development should help sustain the special rural character of an area, and in the sense that its development should be sustainable in its use of resources.

The Concept of Sustainable Rural Tourism:

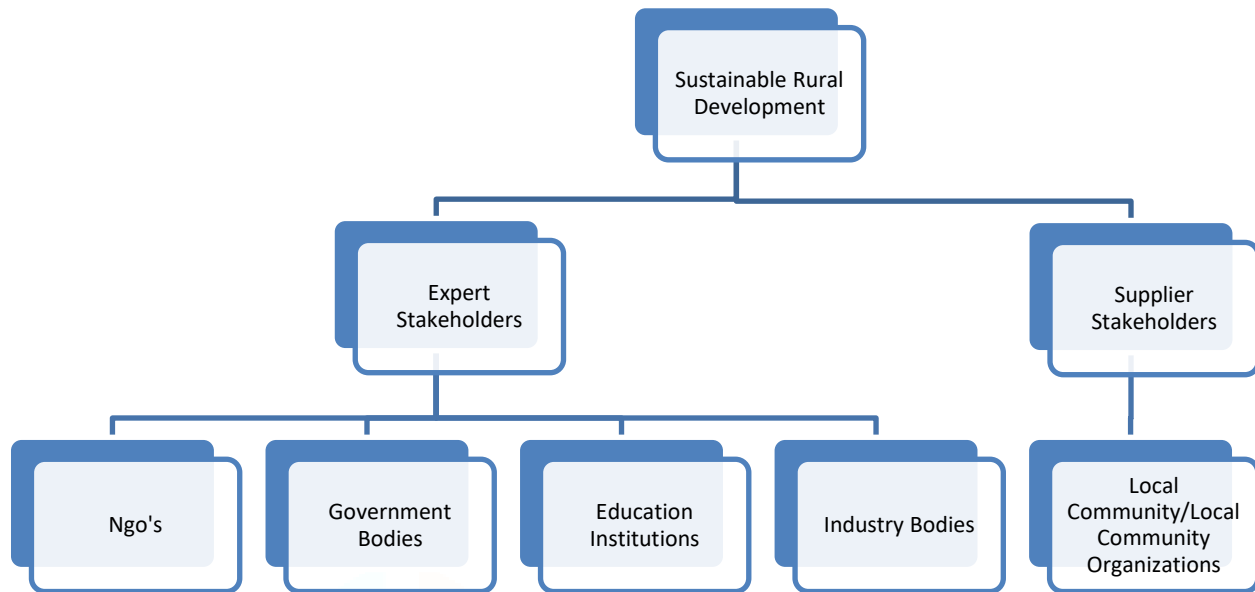
Sustainable Rural Tourism involves social responsibility, a strong commitment to nature and the integration of rural people in any tourist operation or development.

Sustainable Tourism Development meets the needs of present tourists, host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems.

Some factors can be seen as "drivers", pushing the tourism industry towards a sustainable development approach.

These are:

- Increasing regulatory pressure;
- Growing awareness of cost savings from sensible resource consumption;
- Tourism professionals and operators recognise that environmental quality is essential for a competitive product;
- The awareness by governments and operators that the growth of tourism can have a negative impact on the environment;

Role of Key Stakeholders in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development:**Expert Stakeholders:**

NGO's, Government, Education Institutes and Industrial Bodies fall under the category of expert stakeholders as in any rural area where any development cause is to be undertaken, these have been working there.

NGO's work towards the development of any area in Health, Livelihood, Education, and Environmental sectors.

The Government bodies make the policies and are responsible for the implementation of the policies to create a holistic environment for development.

Educational and Industrial bodies provide basic education and job opportunities. The industries are either giving direct or indirect employment to the local communities.

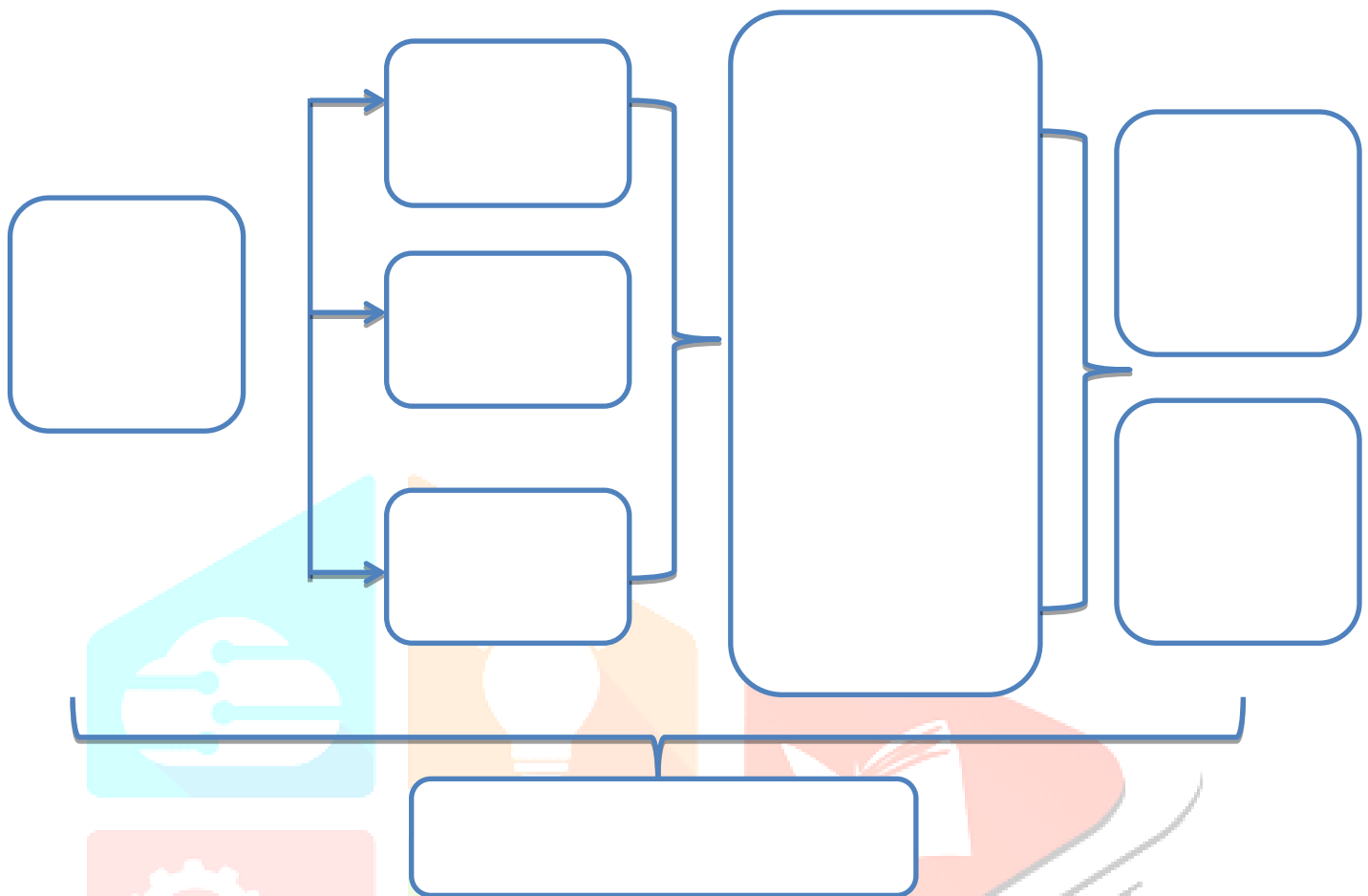
Supplier Stakeholders:

Local Communities plays a vital role in development of a sustainable rural tourism model as these are responsible for creating a value chain for consumables.

Generally, involvement of the community often follows these four steps:

1. **Identifying stakeholders and forming partnerships:** The first step in community-based to identify key stakeholders and potential participants.
2. **Community organization:** An NGO or local government unit can assist the community in identifying an appropriately trained community organizer. Stakeholders are more accessible and have more opportunities to be involved if they are organized, such as with a small pool of representatives who can attend meetings and relay information to and from the rest of the community. The community organizers can also help local community members increase their level of participation.
3. **Involve the community in the planning process.** Community participation in the early stages of planning of any activity (sustainable tourism or any other management activity) will keep the activity focused on community-defined goals and benefits, and will make the community feel engaged from the beginning. Later, ongoing monitoring/evaluation ensures that the plan continues to meet community-defined goals.
4. **Ongoing information, education and communication:** It is also necessary to remember that stakeholders may change, and new stakeholders will eventually arrive who were not involved in the initial planning process.

Theoretical Framework for Rural and Community Oriented Tourism: Sustainable Development



The stated framework provided a structure for development of a rural area into a sustainable tourism model. It can neither be a single party effort, nor it can be done in a day's time. It involves all the stakeholders' commitment and a continuous effort that goes on from one generation to another.

The very first need is to create awareness and sensitize local communities about such a framework as they are the people who will be involved at the ground level. They are to be trained on certain job roles to cater to the needs of the tourists and create a good impression so that footfall of the tourists can increase.

The various stakeholders should play their role with utmost sincerity with a collective goal to creating a value chain that not only favours the community but is also tourist sensitive.

When the framework is in place, and efforts are made to utilize and replenish resources the model will be sustainable as it will cater to requirements of future generation as well.

Conclusion:

Sustainable rural tourism development model and its resulting impacts are most evident from the community members' perspective – at the end of the day, it is the community residents that will harvest them, in all scenarios if things fall into places. The proposed sustainable tourism framework has both theoretical and practical implications. The framework can be used as a guideline to create instruments to be used in measuring the sustainability of a rural or community oriented tourism. Sustainable Community -based Rural Tourism Management towards competitiveness Financial Marketing Conservation of resources, Culture Environment Creation of benefits to the community, Economic Culture Environment, Social Community involvement & commitment, Collaboration & Networking Empowerment, Financial Management, Skill Leadership would suggest that further studies to be carried out to test the applicability of this proposed framework in determining the sustainability of rural and community oriented tourism.

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