

# RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA- ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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**Abstract:** Today, tourism is a major source of income for many countries and affects the economy of a country. Its importance was recognized in the Manila Declaration on World Tourism of 1980 as "an activity essential to the life of nations because of its direct effects on the social, cultural, educational, and economic sectors of national societies and on their international relations."

Tourism brings in large amounts of income in a local economy in the form of payment for tourists by the necessities of goods and services. It also creates opportunities for employment in the tourism sector. In the developing countries with the growth of tourism, there is also a concern for the sustainable environment as people have become more and more cautious about exploiting their natural resources. As a result, there is now increasing agreement on the need to promote sustainable tourism development to minimize its environmental impact and to maximize socio-economic tourism destinations.

The aim of this research is to find out the advent of awareness, opportunities, and sustainability of rural tourism. A number of factors have supported the demand for rural tourism, an increased longing for the countryside as a result of the pressures of modern urban life, a booming natural food market and a desire to conserve traditional rural life. The concept of rural tourism is so vast that it's very difficult to give an actual 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.

**Index Terms:** Tourism, Rural Tourism, Sustainability, Economy, India

## 1. Introduction

Tourism is graded as the second highest revenue making industry after oil industry. It is very vital to distinguish between various types of tourists to understand and investigate the purpose of their visit. In India, there is a huge market for rural tourism especially for foreign travelers, which has not yet developed because of the government which has not taken up any measures toward it.

As per the development of the environmental movement in the 1980s helped to the development and the increase of the availability and the range of holiday types which was more environmentally friendly than these which was associated with Mass tourism. **Wearing & Neil (2000)** define alternative tourism as a type of tourism that is made to be friendly to the environment and to respect social and cultural values of the local communities, and which allow both hosts and guests to enjoy the positive and worthwhile interaction and shared experiences.

According to **Mishra and Saudal (2008)**, the rural tourism is actually an activity that takes place in the countryside. It's multifarious and should entail farm/agricultural business enterprise, and cultural, nature adventure and eco-tourism. As against typical tourism enterprise, a rural tourism enterprise has typical characteristics; it's experience-oriented; the locations area are usually less inhabited, it's preponderantly in natural environments and it supports the preservation of culture, heritage, and traditions especially locally.

As per **Meena (2015)**, the notion of rural tourism is to benefit the local community through entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, generation of income, conservation and development of handicrafts and preservation of the environment and heritage. Rural tourism will bring people of different lifestyles, cultures, and beliefs closer to one another and help in providing a wider outlook of life. Apart from above-mentioned benefits, it will also help in developing social, cultural and educational values.

**Sharpley and Vass (2006)** emphasize that rural tourism exists in some form or the other. In various tourist destinations, the main centers of attraction are located in rural areas; some of them are mountains, lakes, national parks, cultural sites and others. Apart from these tourist spots, this sort of tourism can also be extended to experiencing actual rural lifestyles and locals of the area may readily welcome tourists to their life. Rural tourism has emerged as an important means of addressing the complex socio-economic challenges of the rural communities following the decline of the traditional agricultural economy.

India is a multi-destination country with diverse of tourist attractions and services. India's rich spiritual and cultural history has created distinguishing architectural styles, temple towns, and world-famous monuments. With the Himalayas as the backdrop, India's

mountain hideaways offer some of the best places in the world to literally chill out and revitalize the body and soul. In the year 2005, Condé Nast Traveler listed India as the 10th chosen destination in the world. Surprisingly in the year, 2006 India has moved to the fourth position. India received an estimated 3.5 million foreign tourists and 366 million domestic tourists in the year 2005, a rise of almost 30 percent from 2003. The domestic tourism is expected to grow by 20 percent over the next five years.

According to **Ramakumar & Shinde (2008)**, Rural Tourism is developing as one of the best options available with its proven results in the west, to promote incredible India both for local and foreign tourists. Rural India has much to offer to the world. Rich in traditions of arts, crafts, and culture, rural India can emerge as important tourist spots. The current estimated market for rural tourism in India is around Rs.4, 300 crores per annum. It has the potentiality of appealing to both foreign and local tourists. Rural tourism projects in India have 310 million domestic tourist potentialities. The concept of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' is more openly practiced in rural India in comparison to urban India.

**Karanwal & Dabral (2014)** imply that the pressure of urban lifestyles has given birth to counter-urbanization syndrome. People living in the urban areas are worn-out because of the hustle and bustle of the cities and are willing to try rural lifestyle. This has led to rising interest in the rural life. There are other factors, which are responsible for the shift towards rural tourism can be the increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture, improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness amongst urban dwellers.

**Karri (2016)** said that urban population is increasing day by day, today urban children's world is restricted in the closed door school, classes, cartoon programs on the television, video games, chocolates, soft drinks, spicy fast food, computer, internet, and so on, and they see Mother Nature only on television screen but now the trends have changed and now families living in the urban cities want to come and explore the lifestyle of rural India. They want to go back to their grassroots and experience what their ancestors initially did. They want to show their children the true India and Mother Nature which they cannot experience in the cities. People living in the cities are getting bored of the daily city chaos and are willing to step into the rural lifestyle and experience rural tourism.

Even **Okech, Haghiri & George (2012)** stress that developing any tourism project has challenges, and the same goes for rural tourism as well. Any successful tourism development depends on commercial, economic and logistical issues, such as the quality of the product, availability of skills, accessibility, and infrastructure of the destination and interest of the investor. In most of these aspects, rural tourism may be at a disadvantage. It will lack the policy coordination between rural development and tourism development, and also the low priority that is provided to rural areas by central governments. Thus, ways to deal with these challenges are needed.

## 2. The Scope of this Research is to Ascertain:

1. The impact of rural tourism on the local people.
2. To map the perception of the community in promoting and preserving the cultural heritage of the area.
3. Scope for its further development and to examine the possible challenges and opportunities.

Tourism worldwide has started growing at a considerable pace. Every country has something special to offer in terms of its scenic beauty, beaches, exotic hills, old civilizations and culture, and traditions. Consumers are now demanding something new to experience. There is a paradigm shift in consumer behavior. Tourists are now traveling countryside to experience the rural culture and lifestyle. They are no more going in for urban holidays but instead exploring these rural areas. From the tourism's perspective, many schemes and plans have been initiated to supplement the growth of the rural people. Thomas Cook, the pioneer of tour packages conducted its first excursions to country areas. The motivation for these early tourists was either the experience the popular images that they had been subjected to or visiting their rural roots in the countryside. Hungary is a classic example of the latter.

## 4. Review of Some Selected Literatures

Rural tourism emphasizes on actively contributing to the rural lifestyle. It can be a variant of ecotourism. Many rural villages can enable tourism because many villagers are hospitable and eager to welcome visitors. There is a segment of the urban population that is interested in visiting the rural areas and understanding the lifestyle. This segment in the tourism industry has been rapidly growing in the past decade, leading to rural tourism becoming not just a good business prospect, but a genuine vacation trend.

Even though a vast array of scholars and industry experts from the world over have researched on tourism and specifically rural tourism, it is not possible to study and include all, but some of the major ones are notably mentioned.

**Mishra, Bakash Kumar & Biswal, Saroj Kant (2010)** say that emergence of budget hotels and transformation of the small-sized commercial hotels in India has been overwhelming. In order to manage and handle the situation by the principles of management, hospitality management education institutes have been producing able managers and other related skills for today and future. But,

overall industry requirement exceeds supply. The micro-factor boosting growth and appreciable changes in this segment are owing to the burgeoning of mid-rank business executives as well as the unexpected preference of these hotels by price-sensitive corporate. These hotels are not limited by word budget as they are professionally managed but are compact full-service business class hotels limited only by their size, luxury, and scale of operations. Hotels of this order are now object of fascination and competition is only growing. They have to face the challenges by the uniqueness of the product. The product innovativeness, service augmentations are necessary ways and in order to excel at most coveted front-runner positions, service excellence will always remain as a key area of study.

**Arunothaipipat, Rosamarin (2004)** say that there are several ways in which local educational institutions can assist in developing small hotels to become more viable and sustainable businesses. For example, they can serve as a source of new employees by introducing small hotels to new graduates and providing the hotels with student trainees, temporary or part-time staff and internees. They can also help with networking and cooperate with relevant agencies and organizations.

**Mihailović, Božo & Moric, Ilija (1998)** mentioned that the need for a marketing implementation in the field of rural tourism is encouraged by increasing complexity of market and market relations on a very dynamic tourism market. Some of the factors that define a new way of keeping the rural tourism business in profit include the expansion of information technology; opposition and development in its global character, the fresh buyer and the need for viable development. Today, the marketing concept and philosophy of doing business are becoming essential to all policymakers and implementers of rural development. Specifics of the implementation of the marketing concept in rural tourism development arise from the very specific characteristics of rural tourism supply and demand.

**Maricia, Drutu & Dorobantu, Maria Roxana(2011)** say that sustainable tourism development encounters the needs of tourists and host areas, protecting and increasing the possibilities for the future. Both advantages and disadvantages can be brought about by tourism. It can help to increase the revenue through the growth of other economic activities. The development of fresh cultural and commercial facilities could be helpful for both locals and tourists through the motivation of tourism. The aptitude of the state to control the inaccessible areas and also private welfares to reframe places, to justify them to make proprietorship a part of the natural process of growth.

**Braun & Mc. Less (2011)** say that a close cooperation between all actors should be actively involved in the activities pertaining to rural tourism in order to achieve sustainable development through the rural tourism and agro-tourism in any rural area of Romania. They all must have responsibilities in the understanding of sustainable rural tourism and to safeguard the environment.

**Khairil Wahidin Awang et al (2009)** in their research acknowledged factors that strengthened tourism development theory, which is resultant from the overriding theories of development; Dependency, and Modernization, Alternative development and Neo-liberalism. As experienced in many countries, it was noticed that development was advanced. The processes in tourism development can be revealed through a platform with the help of apt conceptual framework and progress theory. Unilateral actions are not solely the determinants of these processes. Instead, the characteristic of tourism development is a highly disputed one, which among others, is vulnerable to influence from the surrounding environment, appealed by factors such as economics, the environment, culture and politics.

**Sillignakis, KE (2007)** says that rural tourism could be a plan for sustainable development for rural areas. According to the model of **Butler (1980)**, rural tourism can be a tool for product diversity for an area where there has been an inertia stage of the Destination Life Cycle. The plans and objectives for the expansion of rural tourism require adequate caution since rural tourism is a good opportunity for agricultural-based communities. In order to attain better results, the active participation of the whole range of stakeholders is mandatory. With a view to avoiding conflicts and blunders, the steps taken should be slow yet stable.

**Mili, Nitashree (2012)** says that activities taking place in non-urban areas which cover a wide range of temptations and deliver a country understanding are known as rural tourism. Development of the social and economic background is a vital factor for the development of rural areas and also serves as an important purpose of rural tourism.

In **Ahmed, Nawaz's (2013)** research paper, some of the main features in arrears of sustainable tourism have been introduced. Identified about 15 years back, sustainable development was the root of the emergence of concepts of sustainable tourism. To create a quality life for our children, careful methods and long-term plans are the main highlights of the philosophies of sustainable development. Providing low impact with higher quality uninterruptedly, the tourism sector can contribute to an overall sustainable growth. Ecological sustainability, cultural sustainability, economic sustainability and local sustainability are the four posts around which sustainable tourism is constructed.

**Hall, Colin Michael & Boyd, Stephen W. (2005)**, in their book say that a complete examination of Nature-based Tourism in Peripheral Areas is required. The occurrence can be seen within the forest, coastal and marine environments, island, alpine, sub-polar environments. This book envisages ecotourism and the impacts tourism has in susceptible environments when many peripheral regions consider tourism as one of the main opportunities for the development of the economy.

**Okech, Roselyne et al (2012)** say that, the features that signify a rural area counting traditional civilizations, masses, agriculture-based economies, minor settlements and squat population should be imitated exactly the same to be described as rural tourism. In order to map the potential of tourism in the rural areas, it cannot be done so because the image of the study is not well commoditized, packaged and shown. To relate rural tourism with the social, cultural, and economic elements of rural areas and to illuminate answers for the reimagining of rural activities and characteristics, plans had to be made to make the destination more tourist enticing.

**Sofique, Mir Abdul (n.d.)** says that our society can be beneficial through rural tourism if strategized properly. The people of the state can experience revenue generation as a sustainable project. The urban area can help in the flowing of resources to the rural areas from urban areas. This can also prevent the migration of people from rural areas to the urban areas. Damage to rural tourism can be avoided by correct planning and organizing. With a hope to eradicate poverty, development of backward areas, generation of employment, progression of women and many more goals can be achieved with the emergence of rural tourism.

According to **Shin (2005)**, responsible different tourism and peace and opulence complement each other. The local communities should be advanced with the help of tourism. When coming in contact with projects relating to tourism, the participation of the local community along with the intervention of the government is very important.

According to **Saxena Gunjan & Ilbery, Brian (2007)**, initial to going on to contemplate the wider inferences of the research, some deductions are specific to the research area that is drawn. There are limitations when it comes to tourism planning with regard to the incorporation of businesses, in spite of the availability of soft interacting activities at the very resident level.

**Das, Dr. Dilip Kumar & Ray, Nilanjan (2012)**, say that one of the important factors of benefitting the economy and the society is the emergence of the concept of rural tourism. The main purposes of this study include the expansion, growth, and appearance of rural tourism in the state of West Bengal. With the correct utilization of the structural facilities in the area to promote rural tourism and elevation with the help of the host community has been specified in their research. In the near future, for the development of the economy, to generate income, to assuage women, to regenerate the atmosphere, rural tourism is expected to appear as an important factor for supportable human progress. India is capable of ensuring sustainable economic growth and positive social change in this particular destination.

## 5. Rural Tourism in India

After independence, the government was paying more attention towards the growth of key areas like agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc. Tourism was not on their priority list. Whatever growth happened, was on its own merit. Although tourism has started receiving some attention since last decade, rural tourism was never given any priority. (Bordoloi & Kalita, 2012). Worldwide tourism is ranked second highest revenue-generating industry next to the oil industry. It is necessary to differentiate between different types of tourists to understand and analyses their purpose of visit.

There are different ways to attract and retain the customers. There is a large potential market for rural tourism especially for foreign tourists, which has not yet developed because the government has not taken up any systematic approach. It will not only bring people of dissimilar cultures, faiths, languages and lifestyles together but will also provide an expansive outlook towards life. It will not only generate employment for the people but it can also develop social, cultural and educational values. It is a type of nature-based tourism that unravels the essence of rural life, culture, art and heritage at natural surroundings, thereby creating an incredible effect on the development of the local economy and socio-cultural scenario of the area.

## 6. Rural Tourism-Positive and Negative Impact on the Society

Even though rural tourism can bring numerous benefits such as foreign exchange, creation of employment, higher government revenues and the transformation of local industries such as agriculture, handicrafts into a modern service industry, it can also damage many indigenous cultures.

### 6.1 Economic Impact

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
It will create employment for the rural people and generate income for them.	The economic benefits may go to urban communities and entrepreneurs. The rate of economic return to rural communities has been low.
The villagers will be able to provide better food and education for their children.	The service provider and stakeholders such as resorts, hotels and tour operators might be mainly from cities and the possibility is that they will take away most of the profits.

They will have an additional source of income along with their agricultural income.	Most the products consume will be imported from outside, not produced locally.
Create employment especially for the rural youth.	There is a chance that restricted employment opportunities might be generated for the local (rural) population due to their lack of knowledge and experience in the field of hospitality.
Income level will rise.	The rural people can be exploited.
Generate foreign exchange	The rural people will have to depend on the urban entrepreneur, so the benefit may not reach them.
With the rise of income other measures of a community like education, health etc. will rise.	The urban investor will take away most of the profit.
The price of the land will rise.	Less reliance on local food, medicinal products
The expenditure on housing will increase.	The entertainment tax will go to the government the local people will not get the benefit.
Demand for other goods and services will increase.	Rural people may be underpaid.
Improvement in the public services.	The local artisan may not get benefited.
Generate revenue or the government.	There is a big possibility that because of competition in a restricted geographic area, the local handicraft and farm produce products might be sold at a much lower price.
Modernization of agriculture and other rural activities.	Demand for luxury items will increase.
The local small businessman will be benefited.	Increase in the price of local agro products

## 6.2 Environmental Impact

The rural people can learn the healthy environment, roads, electricity, telecommunication etc. For better living on one side on the other side the tourist can exploit natural resources and have a heavy impact on the environment.

Positive Impact	Negative Impact
The local population will be exposed to various ways to lead a healthy and hygienic life.	The visitors may overexploit natural resources and it can have a heavy impact on the environment.
Infrastructure development will lead to healthy tourism practices.	In addition, rural tourism will require infrastructure, transportation and other facilities which can cause environmental distortion.
The impact of rural environment can improve the state of body and mind.	Development of infrastructure may distort the natural beauty.
Help in create and maintain the natural park.	Tourist activities like trekking and camping can cause environmental pollution.
Learn the importance of preservation of natural resources.	Huge number of visitors may exploit the natural resources
They will learn to develop a healthy environment with proper sanitation, roads, electricity, telecommunication, etc.	Hunting can affect the wild life population.
They will learn to use modern tools and technology.	Natural ecology will be disturbed.
They will learn to preserve the natural habitats, bio-diversity historical monuments.	Over population can spoil the scenic beauty.
	High rise building for tourist can spoil the scenic beauty

## 6.3 Socio-Cultural Impact

Since the income from tourism is much higher than what people are earning from agriculture, tourism has been accepted in many rural areas with its negative effects. It is widely recognized that such negative impacts on rural communities have become stronger. Ill-planned and haphazard undertakings result in the villages being invaded by tourists with a different set of values which in turn disrupts the local rural culture. The different standards of living in an urban tourism destination have caused migration from nearby

rural neighbors, resulting in unwanted changes in the demographic structure of the rural setting and possibly creating a non-acceptable culture shock. Furthermore, employment and education can have a negative social impact. The young generation may get better prestige than their elders as they gain experience, jobs, and money from tourism.

Positive Impact	Negative Impact
The rural people will learn the modern culture.	Poorly planned tourism can affect the villagers.
They will learn to come out of their traditional values and beliefs.	It can disrupt the rural culture. It may affect the traditional and cultural practices, agriculture and other allied activities.
They will adopt a different practice of modern society.	Can create disharmony in development
Since the income from tourism is much higher than what rural people can earn from agriculture and other allied services.	Modernization can affect their traditional values and cultural practices.
Education and health of the rural community will improve.	Traditional products will be replaced by modern products
Provide a higher standard of living or the rural people.	Traditional houses are replaced by modern buildings.
Cultural understanding through fairs and festivals and the exchange of cultural beneficial for both.	Can increase the rate of crime
Foreign tourist will bring cultural change faster.	Sexual harassment.
Demand for education will increase.	Overcrowding in schools.
Reduce migration of rural people to urban areas.	Rural people may shift from traditional business to tourism activities.
A market for agro products and handicrafts will develop in rural areas farmers and artisans will develop a direct contact with the customers.	Rural people try to copy tourist can affect their daily life.
	Decline in participation in rural traditional and cultural practices follows.

## 7. Challenges & Opportunities in Rural Tourism

Other traditional jobs are not worth it. The major problem in the rural area is Most of them are engaged in agriculture, some of them are artisans But none of their traditional business is remunerative Villagers are struggling with one or two earning members in the family and high consumption expenditure. Due to some taboos and literacy, most of them are not practicing. Big family low income and poverty in rural areas. Since there is very little scope for increase in the earning in the village, where they get some chance to earn. Today, rural migration has become a major problem in India.

Rural tourism development can give rise to many new economic activities, more demands, competition for services and sometimes more crime. With the arrival of rural tourism, regions will not be the same place as the challenges and opportunities for local communities are to be anticipated while developing a plan to enhance rural tourism.

The major challenges needed to protect the environment and natural resources, the need for education, proper understanding for both tourists and local people, and the need to generate a democratic movement which helps people in all levels participate in tourism development.

## 8. Some of the major problems identified are:

1. Legislation Problems
2. Lack of Trained Manpower
3. Insufficient Financial Support
4. Lack of Local Involvement
5. Underdeveloped People
6. Lack of Proper Physical Communications
7. Lack of Basic Education
8. Business Planning Skills
9. Trained Tourist Guide
10. Communication Skills

## 9. Different tourist segments for rural tourism:

1. Newly Married Couple
2. Family
3. Retired Person/Senior Citizen
4. School Children
5. College Students
6. Patients
7. Foreigners
8. Artist
9. Adventurous Person
10. Corporates

## 10. Essential Elements for Development of Rural Tourism:

1. Creation of infrastructure
2. Restructuring and liberalization of policies
3. Encouragement for investment
4. Law and Order
5. Tourist Police
6. Complaints Handling
7. Standardization of goods and services
8. Government support

## 11. Research Methodology

The research has been designed in accordance with the theme of the study which is a quantitative research. The main purpose of the study is to identify the scope of rural tourism in India

A basic survey was conducted in 2016 through 200 questionnaires using a five-point Likert-type scale. It was designed to identify respondents' preferences regarding the Scope of Rural Tourism in India. Interviewees had been sent questionnaires through social media and multimedia and were asked to administer the survey. Survey participants were interviewed through a convenient sampling approach through electronic media. Respondents were not asked to answer every item in the questionnaire. However, there were many questions that were mandatory to answer.

### 11.1 Data Analysis & Interpretation

Data Analysis is carried out so as to prove the research question correct and upkeep it with the data. The researchers examined the data composed from the primary research in order to come to a conclusion and prove the research question accurate. The researcher collected the data by means of semi-structured interviews. Hence, the researcher moved towards the analysis by first recording the interviews and studying each one in detail. Following the transcribing and studying the above mentioned interviews in detail, the researcher acknowledged the emerging concept of Rural Tourism and its scope towards catering rural tourism in India from all the observed data collected

### 11.2 Some of the basic interpretation from the data collected highlighted the following:

1. When asked whether the respondents had ever visited any rural Area, 94.5% said YES and 5.5% said NO, they had never visited any rural Area. Therefore majority of the respondents are already familiar with the rural areas.
2. When asked about their experience in rural areas, 40.50% said it was Very Good, 20% said it was good and 4% said it was satisfactory. Majority of the tourists say that they had a very good experience.
3. When asked whether they had heard of rural tourism, 81% of the respondents say YES they have heard about rural tourism and remaining 19% say NO.
4. When asked the respondents whether they would like to experience rural tourism, 79% said YES whereas, 21% said NO. Many tourists have an insight to rural tourism and would like to experience it.
5. When asked would they be comfortable in the village/ rustic life style, 75.50% of them said YES, they would be, 21.50% said NOT SURE and 3% said NO.
6. When asked will they be able to sustain with only bare necessities, 68.5% said YES they will be able to sustain with only bare necessities, 26% said NO and 5.50% said NOT SURE.
7. When asked will they be able to live in hut (mud house/ kutiya), 51.50% said YES, they will be, whereas, 9% said NO, 13% said NOT SURE and 26.50% said MAY BE.
8. When asked would they be able to do farming (ploughing the fields, watering the fields, weeding, spraying pesticide, spreading manure, etc.), 62% said YES they will be, 9.50% said NO, 7.50% said NOT SURE and 21% said MAY BE.

9. When asked whether they will be comfortable around villagers, understanding their culture, dialect, thinking, etc., 70.50% said YES they will Be, 13.50% said NO and 16% said MAY BE.
10. When asked whether they will be comfortable in simple living, without any comfort of their homes, having simple food, etc., 78.50% said they will be, 3.50% said NO and 18% said MAY BE

Hence to a lot of extent the above findings conclude that tourists are willing to experience Rural Tourism in India and thus there is scope to promote the same.

## 12. Recommendations

Rural tourism can help in sustainable development. Governments should recognize the importance of rural tourism and provide a healthy competitive business environment. The government should try to generate data for decision-making bodies, making adequate facilities and suitable infrastructures like accommodation, roads, airport facilities, rail facilities, local transport, communication links and other essential amenities. After an intense and basic analysis of the data gathered by the researchers during the secondary research using various authors data's and the primary research data numerous conclusions and observations were made

**After carrying out this research, there are few recommendations which would be helpful:**

- Government plays a vital role in setting up the project. The rural tourism product should be supported by the inputs from the government. Also, financial institutions like banks should take a step forward in investing in these projects.
- Appropriate marketing techniques should be applied to make the destination famous among the tourists. Strategies should be implemented in order to attract tourists to cultural places and simultaneously endorse the rural region. The communities have to transfer themselves from an economy of commodity production to a place of consumption.
- Capacity building should be considered. Increase in ability and skills of the community facilitate the development. Contributions from NGO's and tourism business owners often have a pool of resources which are voluntarily put in these projects.

Any tourism activity carried out in a destination does result in triple bottom line impacts. These include environmental, social and economic impacts. They can, however, be minimized by taking precautionary measures:

- Monitor the disposal of wastes in order to reduce negative impacts on the environment. Engage the community in solid waste disposal management.
- Ensure the tourism activity does not hamper and interfere with the community's lifestyles and values.
- Use the available resources efficiently.
- With the business in the region, there are bound to be economic leakages. Steps should be taken that the income is distributed equally among the members to avoid conflicts.

## 13. Conclusion

Tourism is an activity that has had a growth rate of about 25% in the last 10 years. It is now one of the most revenue and employment generating industries. It is forecasted that in the year 2020 the predicted growth in tourism sector would be highest among Europe, America, East Asia, and Pacific in terms of volume. With the growth of tourism, the question arises of maintaining sustainability and creating responsibility. These days the consumer trend is also changing. They are now not only looking at having fun but also focusing on mitigating the harmful effects that tourism has. They are now demanding a memorable experience that they can cherish throughout. According to them, this comes from doing something good which results in a feeling of satisfaction. By being responsible they are ensuring that they give back something to the society and environment which has helped them develop. With the consumer activity directed to such varied degree of contentment, the travel and tourism trends are changing. More and more people are engaging themselves in community based tourism, agri-tourism, wellness tourism, pro-poor tourism, adventure tourism and rural tourism on a larger scale.

The stress of urban lifestyle has led to a counter-urbanization syndrome. This has led to growing interest in rural areas. There are other factors like rising levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture and advanced accessibility and environmental consciousness which motivate the tourist to undertake this activity. Rural tourism has started and implemented in many parts of the world. Along with rural tourism, cultural heritage can also be achieved.

Rural tourism concept has been very famous in the west. It really has much to offer to the tourists. It is sparsely populated, more outdoor activities, local involvement and mainly in a natural environment. 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.



Rural tourism is emerging as one of the best options to promote India through the Incredible India campaign to both domestic and international travelers. Places which are famous for rich traditions, heritage and values should be marketed well in order to let the people know about the old cultures. The approximate market for rural tourism is around Rs.4300 Crores per annum. The tourists visiting these areas rent out cottages, home stays, indulge in a farm, camping movements, etc. The main aim of promoting the region is to sustain the traditions and values native to it. Through this scheme, tourists are familiar with the lifestyles, authenticity, and customs. With the interactions between them, locals are motivated to safeguard to their culture in order to secure it for future generations. Seeing it from a different angle, it is beneficial for the community as well. Public areas are maintained, beautification of the area takes place and steps are taken to preserve the environment. Locals are employed in the scheme as guides; attend seminars conducted by industry professionals to encourage participation of the community members. There is overall prosperity. The locals perceive the plan to be favorable for them and that is the reason they support it. They comprehend the schemes and plans well into the development of their area and livelihoods.

Rural India is one of the potential sectors of development and revenue generating scheme. Along with revenue generation, there is prosperity among the members. They are growing with the outside world. They are benefitting from these schemes. They are themselves aware of the potential benefits from this program and are endorsing it personally. They are now able to understand the need for safeguarding and the essence of reviving the values among their children who will lead it ahead.

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