



Historical and Religious Places of Rural Tourism in Chitrakoot Region

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Abstract:

Chitrakoot is situated in the northern Vindhyan range of mountains. It is a town and nagar panchayat and is included in the Satna District of Madhya Pradesh. Chitrakoot is surrounded by districts of Madhya Pradesh in its south and western part and by the districts of Uttar Pradesh in its northern and eastern part. Chitrakoot mountain range includes Kamad giri, Hanuman dhara, Janki kund, Lakshman pahari and Devangana famous religious mountains. A large part of district is rocky and denuded forested upland called the patha which is inhabited by Kol tribals. The forest of the Chitrakoot predominantly consists of tropical dry mixed deciduous type. There are many lively fairs which are organized on different occasions and festivals. Overall, Chitrakoot is a perfect blend of divinity, serenity and an exquisite beauty.

I. Introduction:

Chitrakoot is a Hindi word which is made up of two words Chitra and koot here koot means a hill and Chitra has many meanings like light, clear, spotted, interesting, attractive, wonderful, colourful and so it is often called 'The Hill of many wonders'. It is a place of great mythological relevance and religious importance. Chitrakoot falls in the northern Vindhya range of mountains spread over the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Chitrakoot Parvat mala includes Kamad Giri, Hanumaan Dhara, Janki Kund, Lakshman pahari and Devangana famous religious mountains. Many people gather here on each Amavasya, Somwati Amavasyas, Deepawali, Sharad-Poornima, Makar Sankranti, Durga Pooja and Ramanavami are special occasions for such gatherings and celebrations.

Celebrated in the entire Indian literature and sacred books the abode of Lord Ram, his spouse Sita and his brother Lakshman during their exile for about eleven years and a half. Chitrakoot is a holy place famous both for its natural scenery and its spiritual altitude. A tourist is as much thrilled by sighting its beautiful waterfalls, playful young deer and dancing peacocks as a pilgrim is overwhelmed by taking a dip in the Mandakini and by immersing himself in the dust of the Kamadgiri Chitrakoot area has been a live centre of inspiration for cosmic consciousness. Thousands of mendicants, hermits, sages and saints have attained higher and higher spiritual status and have exerted a beneficial impact on the world through their sadhana, yoga, tapasya, Atri, Anasuya,

Dattatreya, Maharshi Markandeya, Sarbhang, Sutikshna and various other sages, seers, devotees and thinkers have lived in this area through all the ages.

II.Rural Tourism:

“Rural tourism is a multy-faced activity that takes place in an environment outside heavily urbanized area. It is an industry sector characterized by small scale tourism business, set in areas where land use id dominated by agricultural pursuits, forestry or natural area.” (Dept.of Tourism, 1994) Rural tourism is regarded as a part of both ‘Rural Development’ and ‘Sustainable Development’. Rural tourism takes many forms, so it is difficult to give an exact definition. Rural tourism is a form of nature based tourism that uncovers the rural life, culture, art and heritage at rural locations, thereby favoring the local communities socially and economically. Rural tourism brings people of different culture, faiths, languages and life style, close to one another and it provide a broader outlook of life. Rural tourism is one of the opportunities that rural communities might consider to improve productivity and incomes. Sustainable rural tourism can generate long term benefits for villagers.

III.Review of Literature:

Tourism plays an important role in the economic, cultural, social and industrial development of any nation, tourism sector has not received due consideration for the researchers in the past. However at present various research institutes, universities and researchers give importance to this sector and publish many literature on tourism which enhance the knowledge of future researchers. To study the literature on tourism many publish literature on tourism is cover under different heads such as literature on tourism in India, international tourism and tourism in rural sectors these are:

- Dr. V. Basil Hans presented a paper on “India’s Tourism Industry – Presented and Emerging Issues” at state level seminar on world tourism day September 27, 2008 at Srinivas College of Hotel Management, Pandeshwar, Mangalore and Karnataka. This paper traces the progress made by India’s tourism industry in the planning era and the emerging issues under globalization.
- H. Lalnumawia written an article on “Development and Impact of Tourism Industry in India”, 2010. In this article writer put his views that tourism industry in India is growing and it has vast potential for generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country’s overall economic and social development.
- Subhasish Saha, submitted Ph.D. thesis on “Tourism Development Accommodation Sector: A study of Pondicherry Accommodation Sector”, Pondicherry University, Pondicherry, 1994. The main findings made in this research are that accommodation units do not have a separate promotion wing, limited extent of tourism promotion.
- Tarannum Husain conducts a research on “Promotional Strategies of Tourism Industry in Uttranchal state of India”, for Ph.D. degree from Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, 2007. The main aim of this study is to study tourism in India and its problem in general and Uttranchal in particular, to focus on the scope of tourism sector in Uttranchal and explore the new avenues of the tourism industry, to study tourist motivators, tourist profile and problem and opportunities with respect to accommodation, accessibility, attractions and amenities and to study the infrastructural facilities and tourism avenues in Uttranchal.
- P.O. George conducts a research work on “Management of Tourism Industry in Kerala” for his Ph.D. degree from Post Graduate Department of Commerce, Kottayam, Kerala, 2003. The main objective of this study is to investigate problem of tourism industry in Kerala and formulating solutions of them, to suggest the ways and means of co-ordination by which the Department of Tourism, Government Agencies and other public and private entrepreneur can effectively employed for the promotion of tourism in Kerala.

- Ms. Manisha D. Thaker conduct a research work for Ph.D. Degree on “Problems and Prospects of Tourism Industry in Gujarat”, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, 2004. The main significance of the research is on identifying and highlighting the problem areas in the field of tourism development. The main aim of this research work is to find the answer of problems like shortcomings in the field of infrastructure development, accommodation, entertainment, publicity and marketing and recreation facility.
- Mr. M.K. Maru has written Ph.D. thesis on “Progress, Problems & Prospects of Tourism Industry in Saurashtra and Kuttchh”, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, 2001. The study covers problems, prospects and progress of tourism in Saurashtra and Kuttchh region. This study learn role of tourism sector in earning foreign exchange, contribution in import and export and generating employment opportunities.
- Mr. R.W. Macitons has written a research article on “Some Tourism Economics”, in which he give emphasis on economic benefits arise from tourism. In this article author recommend that tourism is one of the sources for foreign exchange earnings and it provides employment opportunities.
- Mr. R.B. Garg in his study article, “Promoting Tourism Through and Integrated Approach”, study various means and ways by which promotion of tourism is possible. The author recommends that tourism emerges as one of the positive measure to increase economic and social development for the country.
- Mr. G. Nakhbandh has written a research article on “Integration of Tourism and Environment”, in this research study the conclude that integration of human and environment remain present in every modern business and tourist give emphasis on Protection of all

tourist places like heritage, pilgrimage, sanctuary parks and other tourist places.

IV.Profiles of the Research:

The research has been based on the relevant details of the research area. Research area contains Madhya Pradesh neighboring Satna District and Uttar Pradesh adjoining chitrakoot District:

Profile of Research Area:

1.Chitrakoot District:

Chitrakoot means the ‘Hill of many wonders’. Chitrakoot falls in the northern Vindhya range of mountains spread over the states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Chitrakoot district in Uttar Pradesh was created on 4 September 1998. Chitrakoot Parvat Mala includes Kamad Giri, Hanumaan Dhara, Janki Kund, Lakshman pahari, and Devangana famous Religious mountains.Lord Rama spend a major part of his exile here. According to the epic Ramayana, Chitrakoot is the place where Bharat, brother of Lord Rama came to visit him and asked him to return to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom. It is believed that the supreme Gods of Hinduism, (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) took incarnations here. The place is dotted with many temples and several religious sites. At Chitrakoot, everything relates to Lord Rama. One can also explore the amalgamation of culture and history on this land. Chitrakoot is a spiritual retreat, thronged almost throughout the year by travellers, who have a penchant for the unknown and unexplored. Chitrakoot is a perfect blend of divinity, serenity, and natural beauty.

According to the 2011 census Chitrakoot district has a population of 991,657, roughly equal to the nation of Fiji or the US state of Montana. This gives it a ranking of 448th in India (out of a total of 640). The district has a population density of 315 inhabitants per square kilometre (820/sq mi) . Its population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was 29.29%. Chitrakoot has a sex ratio of 879 females for every 1000 males, and a literacy rate of 66.52%.

- District Chitrakoot lies between Lat. 24° 48' to 25° 12' N and Lang. 80° 58' to 81° 34' E
- Distance Covered by district from East to West is 62 Km. & North to South is 57.5 Km.
- District is bounded in the North by Kaushambi, in the South by Satna(M.P.) Rewa (M.P.) , in the East by Allahabad (PrayagRaj), in the West by Banda.
- District is Linked with Roadways to all adjoining districts of Banda, Allahabad,Satna, Rewa & Kaushambi.

2.Satna District:

Satna district is one of the districts of Madhya Pradesh state of India. The district is having the boundaries of Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh State in North, Rewa and Sidhi districts in the east, Panna district in the west and Jabalpur and Umaria districts in the south. The district takes name from Satna, the headquarters town, which is in turn takes it's from Satna River which flows near the town. Satna district consists of Six Sub Divisions, Ten Tehsils, Four Hundred Thirty Eight Patwar Circle, Seven Hundred Three Panchayat Samities, One Nagar Nigam, One Nagar Palika, Nine Nagar Panchayat, Seven Hundred Three Gram Panchayats, Eighteen Hundred Sixteen Revenue village and Seven Assembly Area. And having 2178.655 Km. (Pacca) all weather road and 2263.535(Kachha) seasonal road. The district has 7,502 km² area and as per 2011 census report Satna district has a population of 768,648. The population density of Satna district is 249 person per km².

The district is located in between 23.58 degree North Latitude to 25.12 degrees North Latitude and 80.21 degrees East Longitude to 81.23 East Longitude. The District is situated about 305 meters above the mean sea level. The district takes the name from Satna, the headquarters town, which is, in turn, takes it's from Satna River which flows near the town. It has 10 Tahsil, Seven Hundred Three Panchayat Samities, One Nagar Nigam, One Nagar Palika, Nine Nagar Panchayat, Seven Hundred Three Gram Panchayats, Eighteen Hundred Sixteen Revenue village and Seven Assembly Area. And having 2178.655 Km. (Pacca) all weather road and 2263.535(Kachha) seasonal road. (district profile satna)

V.Historical and Religious Places:

Chitrakoot a small town situated in the north Vindhyan range is located over the districts of Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh and Satna in Madhya Pradesh. It holds great importance according to Hindu mythology and the epic Ramayana. Legends have it that Chitrakoot was the place where Lord Rama, his wife Sita and his brother Lakshmana stayed for eleven and half of their fourteen years of exile making it a revered site among pilgrims. According to Ramayana, Chitrakoot was the place where Bharata, brother of Ram came to visit Ram and ask him to come back to Ayodhya and rule the kingdom. It is also believed that the principal gods of Hindus, (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva) took incarnations here. This divine city is also known as the 'Hill of many wonders' and it totally justifies the name. Chitrakoot mountain range has numerous places of great religious importance like Bharatmilap Temple, Hanuman Dhara, Janki Kund and much more. It is indeed the gift of nature and the gods. Chitrakoot is also the place where Goswami Tulsidas, author of 'The Ramcharitmanas', spent many years of his life. There are many lively fairs which are organized on different occasions and festivals. Not many know that Chitrakoot is also home to the only university in the world specially made for the differently-abled, Jagadguru Rambhadracharya Handicapped University. Thus, Chitrakoot is rightly called the Place of Many Wonders!

1.Kamadgiri:

Kamadgiri is a forested hill with the base surrounded by multiple Hindu temples on all sides and is considered to be the heart of Chitrakoot. The pilgrims perform Parikrama around this hill with the belief that all their sorrows will be ended and their wishes will come true by doing so. The name of Kamadgiri is derived from Kamadnathji, another name of Lord Rama and it meant fulfiller of all wishes. There are several temples on the 5 kilometres path of the Parikrama, one of the most famous being Bharat Milaap temple, where Bharat met Lord Ram and convinced him to come back to his kingdom. Some part of Kamadgiri Mountain falls in Uttar Pradesh, while some in Madhya Pradesh. Kamadgiri sees a throng of devotees during the Chaitra month (first month of the Hindu calendar) to revel in the festivities of Ram Navami and Deepavali. A grand fair is also held here every month on Amavasya (full moon day).

2.Gupt Godavari:

This is a pair of caves, in which there is a tiny entrance, through which one can barely pass. Water trickles down in streams through the other cave, which can rise up to the length of our knees. It is said that Lord Rama and Lakshman once held their secret meetings, which is validated apparently by the throne like structures present in the cave. Although Chitrakoot is primarily a spiritual destination, there are some hidden surprises for bold travelers, especially those with a taste for adventurous, sometimes risky trips. Among such surprises is the series of caves named Gupt Godavari. One would be surprised as to how this cave is largely unknown to the world, despite its mystic charm matching the likes of Elephanta caves, Ajanta and Ellora caves as the list goes on. This is a place that is slowly emerging as one of the most popular destinations of India, owing to the enigmatic charm of nature. So if you're visiting Chitrakoot, don't even dare to miss this site

3.Hanuman Dhara:

There is a stream of water falling upon the deity of lord Hanuman releasing in a kund and there are langoors in this area which are well associated with Hanuman, the monkey God. Hanuman Dhara is the name of the spring which sprouted from a rock when Lord Ram shot an arrow into it to calm down an enraged Hanuman when he came to this place to extinguish the fire that was caught in his tail after he returned from burning Lanka.

4.Sati Anusuya temple:

The story of Anusuya says that she sprinkled some special water over the holy trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar and this led to their incarnations. Also it is said that Anusuya offered sincere dedication to praise the god to end famine and thus the town was blessed with the river Mandakini.

5.Sphatik Shila:

Sphatik Shila is a place with two massive rocks which are believed to have the footprints of Lord Rama and Goddess Sita. Sphatik Shila literally means crystal rock and is located amidst dense forests close to Janki Kund on the banks of river Mandakini. It is said that Sita and Rama were relaxing here and a crow pecked the feet of goddess Sita which agitated lord Rama and he took off the eyes of the crow however the crow was actually a form of Jayant son of Lord Indra.

6. Bharat Milap Temple:

Believed to be the place of the meeting of four brothers during the period of exile of Lord Rama, Bharat Milap Temple is a very important temple of Chitrakoot. Located along the Parikrama of Kamadgiri a visit to this temple is a must here. One can also see the footprints of Lord Rama and his family here.

7. Janki kund:

Janaki kund is situated along the banks of Mandakini river and it is believed that this is where goddess Sita used to bathe during the period of exile. One can also see marks of footprints by the river side which are believed to be hers.

8. Rajapur:

Rajapur is a small town located in the Chitrakoot district of Uttar Pradesh. What makes this quaint settlement famous is the fact that it is the birthplace of Goswami Tulsidas, the prolific writer of Sri Ram Charit Manas and the Hanuman Chalisa. A small temple dedicated to Tulsidas is present here and is the main attraction of this place. This tranquil shrine was built here to commemorate the life and work of the famous writer Tulsidas, who was born here. Walk through the lanes of history at the temple, which houses many scriptures in the very handwriting of the maestro. Excerpts of the Ram Charit Manas are present here till date and one can easily access the same. Simple and charming in its construction this temple lies on the banks of the Yamuna river and is the perfect place to revel in the marvels of the Indian culture and traditions.

9. Marpha Temple:

Marpha is located just 4 km from Gupt Godavari and is famous for its natural beauty temples and ruins of a Chandel Fort.

10. Ganesh Bagh:

Located just 11 km on the Karvi-Devangana road, Ganeshbagh is a place with a architecturally beautiful temple baoli with seven storeys and ruins of a palace exist. The whole complex was built by Peshwa Vinayak Rao as a summer retreat and is also known locally as mini-Khajuraho.

11. Bharat Kup:

A small temple along with a well, Bharat Koop is located few kilometers away from Chitrakoot. It is believed that it was this place where Bharat stored water from all pilgrimage places in India.

12. Ramghat:

Ramghat is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Chitrakoot. The serene ghat lining the Mandakini River is where Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman appeared in front of the famous poet Tulsidas and he used to sit on the riverside and write Ram Charitra Manas. Ramghat is the centre of all religious activities in Chitrakoot and the most popular bathing ghat. It is believed that taking a dip at Ramghat would absolve a person of all sins. The fragrance of incense sticks and the hymn of holy chants by the saints in saffron clothes at Ramghat makes the soul calm and touched. You can go for boating in the river and enjoy the beauty of this place until the evening and attend the arti with beautiful diya lightings, sounds of bell and holy chants.

13.Ram Darshan:

Ram Darshan temple is one unique temple where puja (worship) and offerings are prohibited. This temple helps people enter integral Humanism by imparting them the valuable moral lessons. The temple is an amalgamation of cultural and human aspects and leaves a mark on anyone's heart who ever visits this temple. The temple gives an insight to Lord Rama's life and his inter- personal relations. One needs an entry ticket to enter the premises.

VI.How to Reach:

1.Railways Facilities:

Main Railway station is situated at Karwi, This is connected by all famous cities with Railway track. Main Railway Route from Chitrakoot is as follows:

- From Chitrakoot to Hajrat Nizamuddin (N. Delhi) via Banda.
- From Chitrakoot to Lucknow via Banda.
- From Chitrakoot to Allahabad, Mughal Sarai, Hawraha via Manikpur.
- From Chitrakoot to Varanasi via Manikpur.
- From Chitrakoot to Kurla (Mumbai) via Jhansi.

2.Roadways Facilities:

Chitrakoot District is connected by all famous cities with National Highway & other road track. Main Roadways Route from Chitrakoot is as follows :

- From Chitrakoot to Mirzapur via Allahabad.
- From Chitrakoot to Banda, Kanpur & Lucknow.
- From Chitrakoot to Rajapur.
- From Chitrakoot to Sagar via Mahoba.
- From Chitrakoot to Panna via Attra & Naraini.

3.Air Facilities:

Bamrauli airport at Allahabad is the nearest airport, 106 km. away from Chitrakoot. Next is Khajuraho Airport which is 167 km away from Chitrakoot. Both the airports have daily flight services to Delhi.

VII.Research methodology:

The required informations are collected from both primary and secondary data sources:

1.Primary Data:

This study is analytical one. Survey on studied has been carried out to find the Prospects and challenges of the Tourism development in rural area. The data have also been collected from 200 respondents by personal interviews. A detailed questionnaire and Participant observation with head of the village members of families and tourist of Chitrakoot region.

2.Secondary Data:

The secondary data have been collected from sources like books, journals, government bodies and relevant organization and internet were also discussed and visited for the purpose.The following studies represent a

comprehensive summary of the prospect and challenges to Tourism development in rural areas Chitrakoot region.

3.Research Design:

Two basic techniques are used for research i.e. observation method and survey method. The data collection instruments will have data and to ensure that all the respondents are asked the same question and in the same order. A sample of 200 respondent will have contacted conducted in Chitrakoot region. The questionnaire personally administered with the will have respondents.

4.Scope of the Research:

The Study provid information regarding Tourism Development in Rural Sectors throw be will come to know about the sustabnal development opton tourism for Rural indigios areas whear it can ideally lead to cultural conservation while improving local living standard of both the distrcet chitrakoot and satna. Rural Tourism, while still only a minority tourism market, is making a valuable contribution to rural economics. Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms. But also in terms of jobs, contributions towards funding conservation, encouragement to the adoption of new working practices, and the injection of a new vitality into sometimes weakened economies. Rural Tourism cash flows can assist job retention in services such as retailing, transport, hospitality and medical care. It can also provide additional income for farmers, and in some cases, for foresters and fisherman. Job creation typically occurs in the hotel and catering trades, but can also take place in transport, retailing, and in information/heritage interpretation. Tourism generates new opportunities for industry. The tourism industry is often promoted as an exciting and growing industry suited to the energies and enthusiasm of young people. The finding of this study indicated that Chitrakoot Region, like many rural localities, is well endowed with natural as well as socio-cultural resources that can be developed in to tourism products. The abundance of natural, cultural and heritage resources indicate that there are opportunities for natural as well as cultural and heritage tourism development in Chitrakoot region. The study area with its forms and agricultural environment has the potential for development and promoting tourism activities such as agricultural product tasting, farm related activities, agricultural fairs and festivals.

5.Limitations of the Study:

The most crucial drawback of this Study was that is deforestation which leads to habitat destruction for animal and plants throughout the districts. Primary data has been gathered from rural responds, urban responds, visitors , tourism government official, tourism non-government official so they have provided information on their memory in the end area coverage was also limited as the search of study cannot be generalized and result cannot be applied equality to the entire division of region. the data of the study has been collected based on the memory of the respondents and there for the presence of memory buyers should not be overlooked because of the drawback of time and source in hand it would not be possible to cover a reasonably a huge region for the motive of research. Hence, a pandemic or other geographic situations such drough flood, landslaide, other environmental damage. commersilization while cause of culture to clash a major problem to the nature of rural tourism because of seasonal nature of tourism result decrease in economy activity.

VIII.Conclusion:

Rural Tourism can be defined as the country experience which encompasses a wide range of attractions and activities that take place in non-urban areas. The most important purpose of rural tourism is economic and social development of the rural areas. Chitrakoot region has much to offer beyond agriculture. It has a great potentiality for different growing segments of tourism like Eco-tourism, Cultural tourism, Historical tourism, agro-tourism,

religious tourism etc. Rich in traditions of art, culture and natural resources. There is a scope of rural tourism in the study area and promotes the local economy, socio-cultural changes and life style of the people residing in and around the Chitrakoot region.

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