

Original Article

Exploring Opportunities for Tourism Entrepreneurship in Rural Area

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Abstract

The Indian culture, customs and way of life, history, legendary objects, heritage, and other attractive tourist spots, including the rural areas of our country, are the most significant considerations towards the development of the local community. Tourism and its derivatives, like hotels, transport, and travel agencies, made larger opportunities for employment and sources of money generation to further their development. Focusing on the exploitation of the local resources, local landmarks, and culture in a bid to offer a unique tourist experience, this study explores the future of tourism entrepreneurship in rural areas. The study focuses on ways in which tourism-related entrepreneurship can help in the economic development of the rural communities, creation of jobs, and reduction of poverty. This paper marks the promises and the challenges faced by the rural tourism businessmen through reviewing past research and case studies. It also provides recommendations to facilitate the development of rural tourism. The study has some implications for policymakers, tourist stakeholders, and entrepreneurs who may wish to develop sustainable tourism projects in the rural areas.

Keywords: Indian Culture, Rural Tourism, Entrepreneurship, Economic Development, Poverty Reduction, Sustainable Projects

Introduction

Since the government started paying more attention to the development of key sectors, such as infrastructure, manufacturing, and agriculture, at the time of gaining independence. Tourism was not one of their priorities. Any development that took place was attributed to its merit. Rural tourism was never given priority even though it has started getting attention within the past 10 years. Kalita and Bordoloi (2012). Tourism is the second largest oil revenue-generating activity in the world after the oil business. In a bid to understand and evaluate the different classes of visitors, it is important that they are differentiated. Drawing in and retention of clients are a number of strategies. The fact that the government has failed to pursue a systematic approach means that the potential market of rural tourism, especially where international tourists are involved, is yet to expand. Besides bringing together people of different cultures, religions, and languages as well as lifestyles, it will give a wide outlook on life. It can also generate social, cultural, and educational values besides providing employment to the citizens. It is a sort of nature-based tourism that brings the soul of rural life, culture, art, and heritage into the natural environment, which makes a tremendous influence on the sociocultural environment as well as on the economic condition of the locality.

The purpose of the tourism development in the countryside is to address the critical need of tourism development businesses not motivated and satisfied by factors of tourism and economic factors connected with the depopulation of the area due to the migration of the rural population to the urban centers. As a type of special-interest tourism, rural tourism has created a niche effect on the minds of tourists in the last two decades. Not only can rural tourism make a significant move to the global arena, but it can also develop in significance to rural India.



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Besides providing the tourists with rewarding and tailor-made holiday experiences through the assurance of total peace, shunned by the congestion of the bustling urban city, as well as the traffic and noise and pollution that accompany it, this form of tourism also provides employment to the local population and diversifies the economy as well as enables it to offer employment within the area.

Although the concept itself is still quite new, it can certainly be beneficial in case it is developed wisely in a country such as India, where almost 68.84 percent of the citizens reside in 638,000 villages. Most of the locals of the village are mainly reliant on farming and are desperately seeking alternative work to keep their heads above water, as they invariably are highly affected by natural problems such as drought and floods, and suicide is not a rare occurrence in the villages amongst the farmer communities. Rural tourism affects both rural and urban life with both positive and negative impacts, like most other forms of tourism. That is why its value cannot be underrated. Considering the urban stressful lifestyles that are contributing to the almost counter-urbanization syndrome, the migration of urban residents towards rural culture and heritage, the reduction in the agrarian and other related income, the absence of alternative ways of earning a livelihood, the possibility and potential of new businesses establishing and new business opportunities, the changing attitude of the Indian and international tourists with respect to environmental awareness, and the increasing demand of niche tourism and eco-friendly products, it is apparent that the future of rural tourism in India is bright. In this respect, the role played by the government and local oversight organizations will be instrumental. The government needs to educate rural people in order to enhance communication skills, inculcate the sense of ownership, sensitize them on the importance of their culture and history, and instill the desire to be actively involved. It is also important to enable the local business owners, investors, private firms, and other players in the tourism sector to consolidate under one roof and construct the basic rural infrastructure. The fourth and most important aspect in the maximization of the benefits of rural tourism is the understanding of the existing business opportunity, village population, sociocultural environment, related community perception, and political and economic stability of a specific region. Facilitating and encouraging this type of tourism would therefore surely give the impoverished peasants the long-awaited way out to a better form and level of livelihood than ever before. Moreover, as visitors travel to any rural area, the urban residents are getting more conscious of the impacts of their visit. They are taking responsible actions in order to maintain ecology and biodiversity. Their purchasing or use of the goods produced in the rural area is in fact doing good to the rural people. Alternative and niche tourism is increasingly gaining momentum since the ramifications on the environment and the society are less negative compared to those posed by mass tourism. The dramatic increase in disposable income has also resulted in the increase in the number of visitors, especially in the metropolitan places.

Objectives

- To understand the role and requirement of rural tourism in the Indian context.
- To attract people to the opportunities of rural tourism.
- To explore the strengths and challenges of rural tourism in India.
- To identify the concepts of maximizing benefits.

Methodology

Most of the secondary data used in this report resembled a collection of varied literary sources, as it comprised websites and news reports as well as research articles. The conclusions and assertions presented in the paper indicate the influence of the personal visitation of the writer to various rural tourism sites and interviews with business owners, locals, visitors, authorities, and other interested individuals.

Literature review

The interest in rural tourist entrepreneurship has been on the increase in recent times due to its capacity to enhance local economic growth, create employment, and also reduce poverty levels. The purpose of this literature review is to give a general overview and give the bodies of research pursued in relation to the issue of rural tourist entrepreneurship and the summary of the essential findings, the issue of research gaps and knowledge gaps.

•Rural Tourism Development

As has been identified, rural tourism development is a feasible way of enhancing the development of the local economy especially in a locality that is economically challenged (1). Other benefits that tourism can bring include the creation of employment as well as boosting the local economies and reducing poverty (2).

•Entrepreneurship in the Country.

The rural areas depend heavily on entrepreneurship as it is capable of introducing the innovation and creating the new economic opportunities and enhance the economic condition of the respective regions (3). Local characteristics of the society such as natural features, cultural heritage are resources that may be harnessed in a bid to form unique tourism experiences, especially, by a tourism entrepreneurship (4).

Religion matters and popularity of any faith must also be taken into account, as well as other threats and chances.

Poor infrastructures, inadequate financial resources, marketing, and promotion are some of the challenges facing the rural tourism entrepreneurs (5). However, due to the rare natural features of the location, the existence of cultural heritage and local tourism business operations, the rural regions also have prospects of exploration into tourism (6).

•Community-Based Tourism

The concept of community-based tourism (CBT) excludes the nature of local communities in tourism planning, design, and management (7). CBT can foster the local effectiveness, culture, and the economy (8).

•Sustainable Tourism

The sustainable tourism is an important element of the tourist entrepreneurship within the rural regions as it can address the disadvantages associated with the tourism in their community and environment (9). Eco-tourism and responsible tourism are some of the sustainable tourism practices that can be used to enable the sustainability of the tourist project in the long-term (10). This paper is on rural tourism entrepreneurship and its role in reducing poverty, employment, and economic development of the local economy. It also brings into the fore the challenges witnessed and limitations facing rural tourist operators. It is necessary to explore further into the opportunities and challenges of tourist entrepreneurship in rural areas and also effective means of enhancing the development of rural tourism.

Tourism and its scope for entrepreneurship in rural areas:

Rural tourism refers to a type of travel that is done beyond the urban areas. Rural tourism in India still has a minor share in the travel industry yet has the potential of increasing the rural economy in a considerably large share. It can increase the number of jobs in the rural regions. The Indian government has also realized the potential that rural India has in offering to the globe and is the engine of development, especially lately. Without criticizing its benefits using mere monetary words, it would be an injustice to its actual input. It instead plays a huge role in maintaining sustainable means of livelihood for the rural population, enhancing local culture and heritage, empowering the local women, minimizing poverty, protecting and conserving the natural resources, improving basic rural infrastructure, embracing new work cultures, and in general, building up a better image of the region and people living there in the eyes of a visitor. It can be very important in the growth of deteriorated and poor rural areas. The following are some of its strengths:

Socio-Economic Development

As a matter of fact, rural tourism boosts growth in the regions and the well-being of the targeted people. has asserted that growth enhances the number and frequency of passengers. Other than giving the host community alternative employment opportunities and aiding in the creation of the basic infrastructural facilities in the declining areas, rural tourism also assists in reducing out-migration. It enhances connection between cities and the rural population. The host also benefits through tourism because tourists absorb the scenery and come to know about the rural culture, customs and heritages, agricultural labor, living arts, and other issues. The locals are empowered, and they are involved in different decision-making incidents.

Alternative Way of Earning

In India, traditional agricultural activities are the most common ways through which the rural people make their living. In this respect, rural tourism can be a smart tool to reduce their overdependence on agriculture and allow improving the overall economic development of the region that would be underdeveloped otherwise.

Employment

Rural tourism has a great effect in terms of the number of semi-skilled jobs that are generated and taken by the local people in numerous industries, including retail, historical interpretation, transportation, small hotels, and catering. It will also give the rural producers an opportunity to sell their products directly to the visitors, and the cultural events will perpetuate the traditional arts, crafts, building art, etc. Performers in the rural regions will be hired to perform their talents at the cultural events, where they will earn money. It allows other sources of revenue from non-agricultural sectors, which to some extent enhances the lifestyle of the rural people.

Job Retention

The rural tourism cash flows have the potential to sustain the jobs within the rural tourism industry, such as retail, transport, hospitality, and healthcare, among others. In the case of local suppliers, farmers, and fishers, it provides them with an additional income. Inasmuch as it may not be as glamorous as the creation of the new jobs, employment retention can aid in the sustainability of the small towns.

Alternative Business Opportunities

Rural tourism creates new business opportunities. Through good connection with tourist facilities, even the enterprises that do not necessarily have a direct connection with tourism, such as the rural ones, can also benefit through visitor activities. As an example, a great number of tourists enjoy trying the local cuisine in different recreational centers. As such, although most of these restaurants do not relate directly with the tourism sector, any restaurant that provides ethnic food may attract tourists.

Poverty Alleviation

Rural tourism is also respected in the global world because of its power to affect the rural population both socially and economically. It has a social and financial benefit for the rural population. It minimizes poverty by setting up other sources of revenue.

Empowerment of Localities

Resorting to rural tourism requires the participation of the locals. Whereas the local hotels get served with meals and beverages by local sellers, the local hotel proprietors offer accommodation services. The local manufacturers make products in reaction to the demand of visitors and sell them in the local market to earn money. Local organizers are sponsored to hold different cultural events in which local artists exhibit their art and culture on the spot to entertain the visitors. Moreover, the residents in the rural area are involved in making some decision processes. As a matter of fact, all this engagement fortifies local societies.

Entrepreneurial scope

Rural tourism is an untested concept in India, and a person can always capitalize on it. Young, enthusiastic, and energetic people are required in the tourism industry. Rural tourism has now provided these young businesspersons with additional career opportunities.

Arts and Crafts Sale

Arts and crafts offer a way of viewing a community and its local culture as well as its tradition, whether of the geography or country. To ensure that they have a memorable experience upon arriving at the destination, urban travellers usually desire to be in possession of a set of local arts and crafts in whichever place they visit. The tendency prompts people to make purchases locally in the form of locally created products and works of local artists and manufacturers. At the same time, it encourages the immediate community to market their products in their local market. This becomes an additional income to the rural dwellers.

Environmental Improvement

“Environmental improvements such as village paving and traffic regulation schemes, sewage and litter disposal can be assisted by tourism revenues and political pressures from tourism authorities. This help develop pride of place, important in retaining existing population and businesses, and in attracting new enterprises and families”. Legacy Preservation: Rural tourism gives a great sense of emotion to both the locals and the visitors, which makes them preserve and conserve their culture and legacy as a way of making any place attractive to tourists and the host people. This feeling is preserved through the aid of rural museums, which are significant to the maintenance of local history.

Suggestions to maximize the benefits

Participation: Community Involvement:

Involve the local communities in the formulation and design of the tourism activities. Develop the local fortitude via training and learning. Tourism is also expected to share the fruits and it is in this respect that the local decision-making needs to be strengthened.

Activities of Sustainable Tourism:

Go green in a bid to preserve the natural resources. Saving of cultural values, traditional behavior. Enhance the environmentally friendly modes of travel such as conscientiousness of the local cultures and tradition.

Marketing and Promotion:

Creating a marketing plan that will assist in augmenting the activities of the rural tourism. Sell via the online marketing and social networking, via the digital channel. Collaborate with the travel agencies and tour operators in order to project the rural tourism cause.

Infrastructure Development:

Construct residential housing facilities, transportation and housing facilities. Invest in technologies construction such as wifi and online payment. Enhance the prospective visitors having some limitations.

Partnership/ Collaborations:

Spirit collaborates with the local companies, associations, and government. Collaborate with the stakeholders which are the travel agencies, the tour and the local communities. Get the financial sources through the assistance of individual investors, foundation and government bodies.

Conclusion

The government should be on the forefront in setting up the appropriate institutions that will enable the entrepreneurship of the rural tourists and instill in them the education based on the skills. Thus, new capabilities and competence is required because of the ever-present risk that globalization creates to the world economy. This can be summarized by noting that, planning of tourism related activities can only depend on the location and residence of the visitor as a prerequisite step and enable the youths in the rural areas to plan business strategies to grow in the future. The possibility of tourism entrepreneurship at the rural sites should also be explored as the means of the evolution of



the rural tourism practice. The book-choice of rural development that could be considered is that of tourism entrepreneurship as it can provide employment opportunities in the country rural areas, diversifications of the economy and preservations of the culture. The natural resource, culture and agricultural resources that were originally possessed by the rural community can be exploited to generate the tourism entrepreneurship.

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