



# MEDLEY IN TOURISM



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## CHAPTER

# RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA: BENEFITS AND IMPACT ON RURAL ECONOMY

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### Abstract

With its rich cultural heritage, historical sites, and abundant natural resources, India is a popular tourist destination worldwide. India's tourist industry has emerged as one of the country's most important economic drivers, contributing significantly to foreign exchange gains. Tourism is one of the most important worldwide sectors, accounting for 11% of global GDP. The World Tourism Organization also predicts that the range of products available to travellers seeking rural experience will dramatically expand over 5 to 10 years. There is a distinct upward tendency in rural tourism. Rural tourism in India has enormous potential due to the country's immense natural diversity and tradition. In India, rural tourism is expected to create jobs and provide a stable source of income for the local community. This paper is an attempt to have a glance at the benefits of rural tourism in India and the impact of rural tourism on the Indian economy.

**Keywords:** Rural Tourism, Rural Economy

### Introduction

Rural tourism has emerged as a critical component in developing an impoverished area that has received little attention from the government and surrounding urban cultures. Rural tourism encourages visitors to spend quality time in rural areas by exposing them to various cultural, indigenous, and aesthetic activities. In this scenario, rural areas appear to be a perfect site for relieving stress and re-engaging in a simple life that provides rest and total peace for a limited time. This type of tourism

is well-known because it has the potential to alter rural life by providing monetary and social benefits. A considerable portion of India's rural population is still predominantly reliant on an age-old technique known as agriculture. However, the profits generated by agriculture are decreasing day by day, and these peasants need alternative employment opportunities. This predicament is prompting people to relocate to surrounding urban areas in quest of a better salary and a better way of life. If rural India can be redeveloped, revitalised, and promoted as tourist destinations, and these villagers have an acceptable number of alternative job opportunities, the propensity of leaving native villages may be reduced, and the socioeconomic status of rural India can be improved. The Endogenous Tourism Project has included most village tourism attractions, resulting in significant investments in these areas. It has aided in preserving local heritage places by raising awareness among residents of their rich culture, history, and heritage, which can be exploited for economic gain and to place their towns on the global map.

### Objectives of the study

1. To identify the benefits of rural tourism in India.
2. To study the impact of rural tourism on the rural Indian economy.

### Data and Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature and purely based on secondary data. Secondary data is collected from various journals, newspapers and websites.

### Benefits of Rural Tourism in India

The benefits of rural tourism to different segments of the population are not the same, according to Indian experience and other research studies conducted throughout the world. It would be helpful to analyse these benefits in terms of the sector:

#### Benefits to the Local Community

Agriculture and associated activities are the principal occupations and sources of revenue for households in any hamlet in India. Furthermore, rural income in India varies greatly depending on the whims of the monsoons. The majority of agriculture in India is rain-fed. Apart from that, agricultural operations are seasonal. As a result, majority of Indian households are financially burdened. This is primarily responsible for individuals moving from rural to urban regions in quest of work. The growth of rural tourism helps rural India resurge in the following ways:

1. Provides new and alternative job options in the village where they live. Their chances of remaining in their current jobs/vocations improve. Rural tourism strength-

ens people's faith in local traditions and occupations, encouraging them to stay in their villages rather than migrate to cities in pursuit of work or other sources of income.

b. It allows them to exhibit their cuisine, heritage, and artefacts. Services such as hospitality services, leisure activities, and crafts/arts all benefit from the growth of rural tourism.

c. By displaying their items to tourists, entrepreneurs' instincts are awakened. In rural villages, enterprising adolescents are given new career opportunities that match their passion and energy. Rural tourism allows rural residents to hone their production and enhancement talents.

d. Because Indian women are famed for their hospitality, rural tourism is the best way to provide meaningful work to women in villages.

### **Benefits to the Tourism Industry**

Despite the fact that India's tourism business is rapidly expanding in terms of the number of local and international tourists visiting various tourist places, the development of new tourism goods is still lacking. As a result, many Indian tourist attractions are packed beyond capacity and have become mass tourism products. It is imperative to develop new tourism offerings. As a new tourism offering, rural tourism fits the bill. If rural tourism is promoted in a systematic manner, the following benefits flow to the industry.

1. The pressure on traditional tourism destinations could be alleviated by promoting rural tourism as a viable alternative. Due to overcrowding, popular tourist destinations are clearly out of reach for low-budget travellers. As alternative tourism products such as rural tourism are encouraged, the market mechanism lowers overheads at popular/traditional sites, which benefits travellers greatly.
2. Rural tourists are often from affluent urban areas and are motivated by a strong desire to relax in the lap of nature away from the city's routine. As a result, they are not price sensitive. Rural tourists can afford to travel because they have substantial finances and a strong desire for an exclusive experience. As a result, the per visitor to the many service providers in the supply chain, such as tour operators, transportation providers, tour escorts, and so on, is substantial.
3. The tourism industry's scope could be expanded when the product mix is enriched by the addition of rural tourism to the product basket. Rural tourism in India, like in Western countries, has the potential to become powerful special interest tourism with special interest visitors as the target market.



## Benefits to the society

Individual actors involved in rural tourism are immediate beneficiaries of rural tourist activities. Society as a whole also benefits greatly in the following ways.

Rural tourism could be used to help alleviate the rural unrest that exists in most rural regions due to low earnings and a lack of even basic amenities, in addition to unemployment. By allowing people to engage with their local resources, rural tourism will have a good impact not only on their earnings but also on their sense of pride.

Villagers take measures to conserve local buildings inherited from the past, abandoned palaces and castles, historic canals, and so on, in order to highlight the rural heritage and culture. Because of the necessity to exhibit what their places are known for, they now have a reason to do so.

Facilitates the creation of a tourism-friendly ecosystem in rural places by enabling residents in communities that the full range of modern tourism had hitherto overlooked.

Rural tourism serves as a low-cost strategy for bridging the psychological and emotional divide between urban and rural populations as consumers and market-places of products.

## Impact of rural tourism on rural economy

Since the country's independence, there has been a large-scale push to urbanisation. Urbanisation brings a slew of benefits, including improved living standards for individuals and economic growth for the economy. It is, however, tainted by negative consequences. People are stressed out as a result of urbanisation, and they seek pathways to unwind. Although tourism has a humanitarian component, its economic confidence cannot be underestimated. Initially, historical sites or areas of natural beauty became tourist destinations, and these destinations grew commercially as a result.

Rural tourism is an example of a policy that focuses on developing rural regions into tourist destinations. This is a relatively new concept in India; nevertheless, the global trend began in the 1970s. The rural economy has to be rejuvenated because it is overly reliant on agriculture, and agro-based companies have not grown at the appropriate pace due to a lack of forwarding linkages. As a result, the rural economy has been in a state of stagnation. In such a circumstance, rural tourism can be a powerful catalyst. The importance of rural tourism in the rural economy necessitates a definition of the

terms "rural" and "rural tourism." The term "rural" has varied meanings in different nations, and there is no universal agreement on how to define it. It can be defined broadly as a location with a low population density, big open fields, low technology levels, and a limited reliance on technology for survival. According to the Ministry of India, a rural area is defined as an area with a population of less than 10,000.

Around 69 per cent of the population lives in the villages. Furthermore, agriculture is the primary source of income for 62 per cent of the country's population. Rural tourism is now defined as any type of tourism that promotes rural life, culture, traditions, folklore, handicrafts, and history in rural areas. Agritourism, ecotourism, adventure sports, and cultural tourism are all examples of rural tourism. The primary goal of rural tourism is to provide tourists with a direct experience of rural life in all its forms. One of the reasons for the growth of rural tourism is to help people reconnect with their roots, as many families have lived in rural areas for decades. Rural tourism is attracted by characteristics such as low technology, lower population density, natural products, fewer technology interventions, and low-cost accommodations.

### **Tourism and Economy**

The tourist sector's direct contribution to GDP was 3.7 percent in 2017, predicted to rise to 7.6 by 2028. In 2017, the total contribution to GDP was 9.4%; and in 2028, it is expected to be 11.9%. In terms of employment, total employment generated by the sector was 5%, and is expected to increase by 12 percent in 2028. The fact that 10.8 million foreign passengers visited India in 2017, demonstrates the sector's potential. In 2017, 1613.6 million domestic tourists visited the country. Between 2016 and 2017, the foreign exchange earned from this source increased by 17% to INR 180379 crores. The Brundtland Report in 1987, sustainable development has been at the center of developmental policies around the world. The present argument on circular economy is about the same thing, and rural tourism is one way to get there. Rural tourism is concerned with the use of local resources, both physical and human, to market and promote tourism all over the world. Infrastructure development is critical, particularly in developing countries like India. When a village is chosen to be a part of a tourism destination, the state assists in the development of these amenities.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the fact that India's tourism business is rapidly expanding due to an increase in the number of local and international tourists visiting various tourism sites, the development of new tourism products is far from satisfactory. As a result, Indian tourist locations are packed past their limits and have become mass tourism goods. It is past time to develop new tourism offerings. As a new tourism offering



rural tourism fits the description. If rural tourism is promoted in a systematic manner, many benefits flow to the industry. Rural tourism not only promotes tourism in general and creates jobs, but it also helps villages become self-sufficient in a variety of ways. It has aided in the preservation of local heritage places by raising awareness among local residents of their rich culture, history, and heritage, which can be exploited for economic gain and to place their towns on the global map. There are some bad influences that have entered these areas alongside the positive ones, but a cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that the people's level of living has improved because these locations are administered and maintained by locals, the area's authenticity is preserved, which gives them a greater sense of belonging and allows them to explore new ways to supplement their income. In short, rural tourism has so many benefits and impacts on the rural economy of India.

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