



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is a Blessing

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

GIST OF KURUKSHETRA

FEBRUARY 2019

Shankar IAS Academy™

Door No 18, New Plot No 259 /109,
AL Block, 4th Avenue, Shanthi Colony,
Annanagar, Chennai - 600040.



I N D E X

KURUKSHETRA – APRIL 2019

1. SOCIAL CULTURAL IMPACTS OF RURAL TOURISM	3
2. IMPACT OF RURAL TOURISM ON RURAL ECONOMY.....	4
3. BRANDING RURAL TOURISM.....	6
4. RURAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM	7
5. INCREASING INTEREST IN RURAL TOURISM	9
6. AGRI TOURISM POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES.....	11



KURUKSHETRA – APRIL 2019

1. SOCIAL CULTURAL IMPACTS OF RURAL TOURISM

What is meant by rural tourism?

- Rural tourism can be defined as the country experience which encompasses a wide range of attractions and activities that take place in agricultural or non-urban areas.
- The essential characteristics of this form of tourism include wide-open spaces, low levels of tourism development, and opportunities for visitors to directly experience agricultural and/or natural environments.

What are the prerequisites of rural tourism?

- Site should be located in a rural area.
- It should revolve on small settlements, open space and in contact with nature and the natural world, traditional societies, their heritage and traditional practices.
- Traditional in character, growing organically, and connected with local families.
- It will often be very largely controlled locally and developed for the long term good of the area.

What are the positive impacts of rural tourism?

- Rural tourism, though just a minority tourism market, is making a valuable contribution to rural economies.
- Its contribution can be expressed not only in financial terms, but also in terms of jobs, contributions towards funding conservation and encouragement to the adoption of new working practices.
- In terms of the social fabric of the rural community, definitely an additional source of income that comes from tourism contributes positively to this community.
- The rural society through tourism can overcome their complete dependence on agriculture for revenue.
- Tourism can also build a sense of pride amongst the rural community in their heritage and traditions.
- The rural community is also exposed to the urban world directly and interactions between the two can lead to encouraging mutual respect.
- Increased social contact brings opportunities for cultural exchanges, greater awareness and the revitalization of local customs, crafts and cultural identities.
- It can also aid in preventing the youngsters of these communities to shift to urban centers as they are now exposed



to an array of alternate income through tourism.

- The role of women can also gain momentum as they participate and gain economically from tourism.
- The facilities created for tourists can benefit the residents in terms of upgraded infrastructure, health and cleaning of public spaces.

What are the negative impacts of rural tourism?

- Tourism can turn local cultures into sellable items or commodities.
- Religious rituals, traditions and festivals are reduced to commodities that conform to tourist expectations.
- By being in contact with lifestyles and different consumption patterns, local residents directly compare their standards of living with those of other people and this can lead residents to adopt tourist's demonstrated behavior.
- Tourists on their visits to rural destinations seek to purchase the local arts, crafts and cultural manifestations as a souvenir and the local craftsmen then respond to these demands but keeping up with the tastes and requirements of the tourists make changes in design of their products to bring them more in line with the demands.

- This leads to cultural erosion and eventually the original version of the artifact becomes just a museum piece.
- This once again severely damages the rural structure as authenticity is lost due to modern demands and interventions.
- Other negative social influences of tourism of rural societies can be felt in rise in prices of basic commodities which are hiked due to the tourists but impacts the local community.
- Crime rates may typically increase with growth of tourism activities in the rural area affecting the local population.
- Another concern due to growing tourism in rural areas is the employment of children as they work for low pay.
- The ill of child labor is another issue that needs to be addressed by the tourism industry.
- Rural areas may also experience a surge in flesh trade as these bring easy money.

2. IMPACT OF RURAL TOURISM ON RURAL ECONOMY

What is the economical status of tourism in India?

- The direct contribution of the tourism sector to GDP was 3.7 percent in 2017 which was expected to increase to 7.6 percent in 2018 and by the Year 2028, it would be 3.9 Percent of GDP.



- If the total contribution to GDP is seen then it is 9.4 Percent in 2017, for 2018 the forecast to rise by 7.5 percent and for 2028, it is 6.9 percent.
- In terms of employment, in 2017 the total employment generated was 5 percent which is expected to increase by 2.8 Percent in 2018 and by 2.1 percent in 2028.
- The potential of this sector can be gauged by the fact that 10.8 million foreign travelers visited India which was 15.6 percent more than 2016.
- The number of domestic tourists was 1613.6 million in 2016.
- The total foreign exchange earned from this source is INR 180379 crores showing a growth of 17 percent between 2016 and 2017.

What is the evolution of rural tourism in India?

- Rural tourism was first introduced in India in the National Tourism Policy whereby 103 projects were sanctioned by the government during the Tenth Five Year Plan.
- In the Eleventh Five Year Plan rural tourism became one of the primary tourist product and the government sanctioned 69 rural tourism projects.
- By the Twelfth Five Year Plan it was decided to develop clusters, proposing 70

such clusters with a total investment of INR 770 crores.

- Rajasthan and Kerala were the early movers to take advantage of this scheme.
- Villages with special art form, cuisine, historical importance, and beauty or adventure sport sites have been developed in various states.

What are the benefits for the village because of rural tourism?

- When a village gets selected to be a part of rural tourism destinations then the state machinery helps in developing these amenities.
- It draws the attention of the local residents on the heritage and culture that they uniquely possess which needs to be showcased to the world.
- There is capacity building in these sites in terms of culinary skills, soft skills etc which provides indirect employment.
- The local business gets boost as the number of consumers go up making it beneficial for local consumers as well as they get more variety of products.
- Employment also goes up but it may not be permanent in nature but there is diversification from agriculture which is a positive sign for the rural economy.
- There is huge infusion of investment in the core and periphery of the villages thereby



improving the overall economic health of the villages.

What are the potential damages the rural tourism can create in these villages?

- The urban mass brings with itself new technology and means which destroys the serenity of these places.
- The very environment which acts as a pull factor becomes polluted because of tourists harming the health of the local people.
- Many a times the local resources go out of bounds for the local people as they are treated as special incentives so as to draw more tourists.
- The work culture of the villages gets disturbed as tourism is usually part time, thereby the working ethos changes.
- Though there is a shift of employment from agriculture to tourism but it has been observed that the by product is given more importance than the main occupation which is detrimental for village economy.
- There is also local price inflation that reduces the local demand and thus makes the model unsustainable.
- As these sites are community run, most of the work is done by the local people which is a positive for the economy but for women it adds to their work burden.

3. BRANDING RURAL TOURISM

What is rural tourism?

- UNWTO understands Rural Tourism as "a type of tourism activity in which the visitor's experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle / culture, angling and sightseeing".
- Rural Tourism activities take place in non-urban (rural) areas with the following characteristics:
 1. low population density,
 2. landscape and land use dominated by agriculture and forestry and
 3. traditional social structure and lifestyle.

What factors led to the launch of rural tourism?

- The expansion of urban environment has engulfed the greenery and the residents are forced to stay in built surroundings which cannot be claimed as healthy.
- It has thereby created various social and environmental issues.
- People are trapped urban rat race of success and hence they need some change.
- They want to spend some quality time away from their urban lifestyle with their family members where they can relax in a calm surrounding, interact with each other and have fun.



What are the aspects of rural tourism?

- It should showcase all the rural background i.e rich culture heritage and rural life.
- It is a beginning of pro-poor tourism linking benefits of tourism to the local community in the area of employment and social development.
- The tourists get involved in one to one interactions with locals, open the path for many enriching tourism experience and other community based tourism development projects.
- Rural Tourism is essentially an activity linked with countryside.
- Rural Tourism has many dimensions; it does not attract tourists to the village life only but touches other aspects like cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and ecotourism as well.
- The heart of the rural tourism is its architecture and food. The home is homely in true sense and the food which is served is prepared with local available resources. It can be said that rural tourism is experience oriented activity.
- It is also promoting sustainable tourism promotion, community based tourism, volunteer tourism, responsible tourism and other holistic approaches of tourism development.

- The development of rural tourism emphasis on three important aspects like must see the place, do something constructive and contribute to the locals in increasing their income with the purchases.
- Though the locations in rural tourism spots are sparsely populated but it is conducted in the natural environment.
- It can also be blended with local festivals, fairs, etc., with maximum stress to preserve and conserve local tradition, culture and heritage

4. RURAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

What is meant by sustainable tourism?

- The most widely accepted definition of sustainable tourism is that of the World Tourism Organization, which defines it as "tourism which leads to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems."

What are the challenges?

- In many mountain regions, small islands, coastal areas and other ecologically fragile places visited by tourists, there is an increasing concern that the negative impact of tourism on the natural environment can ultimately hurt the tourism industry itself.



- There is now Plenty of evidence of the "life-cycle" of a tourist destination, that is, the evolution from its discovery, to development and eventual decline because of overexploitation and subsequent deterioration its key attractions.
- In many developing and developed countries alike, tourism destinations are becoming overdeveloped up to the point where the damage caused by environmental degradation-and the eventual loss of revenues arising from a collapse in tourism arrivals-becomes irreversible.
- Many hill stations and beaches in India are moving towards end of "life-cycle" as tourists are heading towards more cleaner and better tourist locations.
- In addition, tourism in many destinations could be particularly threatened by external environmental shocks, notably the potential threat of global warming and sea-level rise.
- Significant rises in sea level could cause serious problems to tourism activities, particularly in low-lying coastal areas and small islands.
- It will safeguard rural people's interests and will reduce the pressure to earn living miles away from their homes.
- **Second**, as most of India's around 700 wildlife habitats fall in remote areas, eco-tourism can help in preventing further degradation of the forests and providing protection to the wildlife there.
- Local communities should be involved in eco-tourism activities so that they provide them employment and an incentive to protect environment.
- **Third**, community development and involvement can help in sustainable tourism.
- For this, community based initiatives like encouraging women to set up more community radio centers in India, formation of folk dance groups and community based guided tourism activity can help in including all acquire key stakeholders.
- A successful model consisting of community practioners and potential investors can help in generating more employment opportunities apart from large revenues.

How to promote sustainable tourism?

- **First** and foremost step is preservation of traditional culture.
- The income generated from tourism can be utilized in preserving ethnic forms of art, dance and folk songs.
- **Fourth**, promotion of non-intrusive tourism, meaning those coming from outside should not hurt cultural, religious and societal ethos of the locals.



- In many parts of India, tourists are not welcome as local traditions are a form of entertainment for them.
- Tourists should be made aware about local culture and ethos before allowing them visiting non-commercial and pristine rural areas.
- **Fifth**, the sustainable tourism should be seen as poverty reduction strategy as envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.
- Considering that the United Nations has placed poverty at the center of the international development agenda, it can be argued that sustainable tourism development should go beyond the promotion of broad socio-economic development and give greater priority to poverty reduction.
- For this, a pro-poor tourism (PPT) approach needs to be converged with sustainable development strategy.
- **Sixth**, legislative backing for sustainable tourism to ensure its development and ecological goals are met.
- The law can also define the role of different stakeholders including different government agencies, communities involved and individuals for sustainable tourism, and also assure quality hospitality for the tourists.

- The law can look at poverty reduction though sustainable production and consumption for the sector in rural areas.

5. INCREASING INTEREST IN RURAL TOURISM

What are the major types of rural tourism in India?

- **Agricultural Tourism:** To explore more about the agricultural industry and how farmers work with crops.
- **Cultural Tourism:** To allow tourists to be immersed in local culture related activities, like rituals and festivals.
- **Nature Tourism:** Responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people.
- **Adventure Tourism:** Any constructive activity which tests the endurance of both a person and his equipment to its extreme limit is termed as Adventure Tourism.
- **Food Routes:** Where wanderlust meets the variety that persists in our cuisine. This tourism is all about food and knowing more about diverse staples of different places.
- **Community Eco-tourism:** Where tourism is for a purpose. It is a rather responsible travel to natural areas that conserve the environment and improves the well-being of local people.
- **Ethno-tourism:** To expand the horizon to view different cultures. It is essentially to



know more about various ethnic and cultural lifestyles and beliefs.

What are the popular rural tourism destinations in India?

- **Kutch Adventures India:** Community Tourism in Kutch; Forays into Rann of Kutch of Gujarat to visit artisans' villages as well as the salt desert.
- **Itmennan Lodges Punjabiyat:** Farming in Rural Punjab; Gives the tourist a taste of various farming activities.
- **Ecosphere Spirit:** High altitude rural tourism; Visits to Buddhist monasteries, yak safaris, treks to villages, village homestays, and cultural performances are some of the possible activities.
- **Lachen, Sikkim:** It is located at 8500 feet against the backdrop of snow-capped peaks, glaciers and rock cliffs, amidst mixed conifer and Rhododendron forests. Made accessible to tourists only a few years back, it retains an unspoilt freshness.
- **Ballabhpur Danga, West Bengal:** Ballavpur Danga, 3 KM from Shantiniketan, is a Santhal Adivasi tribal community in the pastoral beauty of rural Bengal. The Sonajhuri forest lies to the east and the Ballavpur Avayaranya forest area and bird sanctuary is to its south. Santhali art, craft and culture is closely knit into the community's life.
- **Sunderbans Village Life:** The UNESCO World Heritage Site with the largest

mangrove vegetation in the world is a great attraction for tourists.

- **Majuli in Assam:** The largest river island on the Brahmaputra river in Assam is a popular tourist destination.
- **Pochampally, Telangana:** Tourists can have a look weaving of the famous silk sarees known by the same name.

How rural tourism benefits women?

- Rural Tourism can create long term employment and provides skilled/unskilled training and career development opportunities for women.
- Rural Tourism will boost women's empowerment and provides young/agriculturist livelihood diversification.
- Rural Tourism has the potential of establishing medium and small enterprises started by women entrepreneurs.
- Rural tourism will promote local production, education, art and architecture, community self esteem and pride, heritage and nature conservation.
- Rural Tourism will create new infrastructure superstructure, helps to maintain local services and facilities and improves quality of life for women.
- Development of Rural Tourism is the passport of poverty alleviation and can double the women farmer's income without creating negative impacts on environment and ecology.



What are the challenges faced by women?

- Rural women and farmers have inadequate knowledge, education and exposure which construct problems in understanding and management of travel and tourism sector which is most dynamic and vibrant.
- They have modest business proficiency and deficient in business and market opportunities.
- Inadequate infrastructures, lack of financial support, unsatisfactory training and education opportunities are other problems.

6. AGRITOURISM POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES

What is meant by Agri tourism?

- **World Tourism Organization** (1998) defines agri tourism as “ involves accommodation being offered in the farm house or in a separate guesthouse, providing meals and organizing guests’ activities in the observation and participation in the farming operations.”
- **Agri tourism for farmers** is considered as “A range of activities, services and amenities provided by farmers and rural people to attract tourist to their area in order to generate extra income for their businesses”.
- **Agri tourism for tourists** is considered as “anything that connects tourists with the heritage, natural resource or culinary

experiences unique to the agricultural industry or a specific region of the country’s rural areas.”

What is the scope of Agri tourism?

- **An inexpensive gateway** - The cost of food, accommodation, recreation and travel is least in Agri-Tourism.
- Present concept of travel and tourism is limited to urban and rich class which constitutes only a small portion of the population.
- However, the concept of Agri-Tourism takes travel and tourism to the larger population, widening the scope of tourism due to its cost effectiveness.
- **Curiosity about the farming industry and life style** - The urban population having roots in villages always have had the curiosity to learn about sources of food, plants, animals, raw materials like wood, handicrafts, languages, culture, tradition, dresses and rural lifestyle.
- **Strong demand for wholesome family oriented recreational activities** - Villages provide recreational opportunities to all age groups i.e. children young, middle and old age, male, female, in total to the whole family at a cheaper cost.
- Rural games, festivals, food, dress and the nature provides variety of entertainment to the entire family.



- **Health consciousness of urban population and finding solace with nature friendly means** - Modern lifestyle has made life stressful and average life span has come down. Hence, people are in constant search of pro-nature means to make life more peaceful.
- Organic foods are in greater demand in urban areas and foreign countries. In total, health conscious urban population is looking towards pronature villages for solutions.
- **Interest in natural environment** - Busy urban population is leaning towards nature.
- Because, natural environment is always away from busy life. Birds, animals, crops, mountains, water bodies, villages provide totally different atmosphere to urban population in which they can forget their busy urban life.
- **Rural recreation** - Villages provide variety of recreation to urbanites through festivals and handicrafts. Villagers (farmers) lifestyle, dress, languages, culture / traditions which always add value to the entertainment.
- **Interest in natural environment** - Busy urban population is leaning towards nature.
- Birds, animals, crops, mountains, water bodies, villages provide totally different atmosphere to urban population in which they can forget their busy urban life.
- **Disillusionment with overcrowded resorts and cities** - In resorts and cities, overcrowded peace seekers disturb each other's peace.
- Even though efforts are made to create village atmosphere in the sub urban areas through resorts, farm houses, it looks like a distant replica of the original.