

RESPONSIBLE RURAL TOURISM

MULTIDIMENSIONAL ASPECTS OF TOURISM-BASED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS



Editors:

Mohammad Badruddoza Talukder
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Responsible Rural Tourism: Multidimensional Aspects of Tourism-Based Growth and Development in Rural Areas

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ISBN (Online): 979-8-89881-318-5

ISBN (Print): 979-8-89881-319-2

ISBN (Paperback): 979-8-89881-320-8

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First published in 2026.

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FOREWORD

Responsible tourism is a new approach focused on ensuring that local communities benefit fairly from tourism development, offering tourists opportunities to reconnect with nature. It aims to create better tourism destinations and enhance visitor experiences. The book *“Responsible Rural Tourism: Multidimensional Aspects of Tourism-Based Growth and Development in Rural Areas”* thoughtfully addresses the challenges of responsible tourism. It brings together diverse expertise, offering a comprehensive view on integrating responsible practices into rural tourism management. Covering topics such as sustainable conservation and tourism initiatives, the chapters offer practical insights and recommendations for businesses, policymakers, and scholars. Case studies illustrate successful models of responsible tourism. This book is expected to be a significant contribution to tourism studies, guiding future professionals toward sustainable development in rural tourism.

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PREFACE

Responsible tourism is a very new approach that ensures that local communities have a fair share of benefits in developing tourism and offers an array of possibilities for tourists, offering a place to refresh, recharge, and re-awaken with the power of nature. It aims to create better tourism destinations, provide a more enjoyable experience, and attract visitors with its scenic beauty, sports attractions, and rich cultural heritage. Responsible tourism represents income and economic opportunities for remote rural communities. This book, *Responsible Rural Tourism: Multidimensional Aspects of Tourism-Based Growth and Development in Rural Areas*, the first of its kind, contributes to advancing research on multidimensional, responsible rural tourism. It presents a conceptual framework for understanding rural tourism from a new perspective, empirically clarifies the specific issues and constraints for the development of responsible rural tourism, and investigates how to overcome these issues.

This book comprehensively explores responsible tourism and environmental stability, catering to a diverse audience that includes students and budding engineers as well as seasoned professionals in environmental science and rural tourism. It delves into various crucial topics, each meticulously crafted to provide valuable insights into the complex issue of responsible rural tourism and environmental stability. By contributing to the local economy, respecting the customs and traditions, and protecting the environment, responsible tourists can affect the villagers' quality of life. This book presents the fundamentals of responsible rural tourism and examines both successful and failed attempts to develop it.

This book—the first of its kind—contributes to the advancement of research on “multidimensional responsible rural tourism,” which represents a conceptual framework for understanding rural tourism from a new and unique perspective. It empirically clarifies the specific issues and constraints for the development of “Responsible Rural Tourism” and also investigates how to overcome these issues. We are deeply grateful to the contributors, researchers, and industry practitioners who have shared their insights and experiences to enrich this book. Their expertise has been instrumental in making this a comprehensive resource on “Responsible Rural Tourism”.

Chapter 1: Transforming Rural Landscapes: The Role of Farm Tourism in Haryana's Socio-Economic Development

Haryana, known as the "Land of Farmers," is a pioneering state in farm tourism in India. At various points in time over the years, various aspects of life in Haryana—the social and cultural—have become important tourist attractions, and, nowadays, agri-tourism is considered a major sector. Haryana, being an agriculture leader, formally announced the Farm Tourism scheme on World Tourism Day on 27th September 2003. This scheme is based on a public-private partnership model aimed at promoting rural culture and agriculture practices. The government amended this scheme in 2024 for strengthening farm tourism by introducing modern facilities, agri practices, cooked food, accommodation facilities, and culture performances, etc. This paper is an attempt to explore the social and economic impacts of the farm tourism sector in the state of Haryana.

Chapter 2: Responsible Tourism in Vettaikaranpudur, Tamil Nadu – A Case Study on Rural Tourism Destination

The post-pandemic has resulted in a growing interest, particularly in rural destinations where nature, culture, and heritage are not being affected by traditional mass tourism activity.

Realising the necessity of responsible tourism, researchers have considered one such rural tourism village: Vettaikaranpudur, recently awarded as the Best Tourism Village by the Government of India (GoI), has been selected as the study area to explore the viability and implementation of responsible practices for sustainable development.

Chapter 3: Navigating Challenges: The Role of Psychological Ownership in Tourism Entrepreneurship Intentions among Rural Youth

Rooted in the transformative potential of rural tourism entrepreneurship, the research underscores its critical role in fostering economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Psychological ownership, characterized by an emotional attachment and sense of possession toward local resources, emerges as a key motivator of entrepreneurial behavior. However, rural entrepreneurs face systemic barriers, including limited access to financial resources, skill deficits, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which hinder their participation and success. This research investigates the dual role of psychological ownership as both a motivator and mediator in navigating these challenges. Drawing on a combination of psychological and structural factors, the study aims to validate the relationship between psychological ownership and tourism entrepreneurship intention, assess the influence of entrepreneurial challenges, and analyze the mediating role of psychological ownership in this interplay.

Chapter 4: Kerala's Responsible Tourism Model: A Blueprint for Sustainable Rural Tourism Development Across Indian States

The Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission (KRTM) Society, which involves local people, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes economic growth, has become a pioneering effort in the promotion of sustainable tourism in rural destinations. The chapter examines the success story of the society and highlights some of its primary tactics, such as eco-friendly operations, community-based tourism, and skill-development initiatives that have empowered local stakeholders in the rural areas. The chapter assesses the observable social, economic, and environmental advantages produced by the Responsible Tourism concept by looking at case studies from different rural destinations in Kerala.

Chapter 5: Evaluating the Key Determinants of Responsible Rural Tourism

This study investigates the main factors influencing responsible rural tourism in the well-known Indian rural communities of Amber and Bassi, which are close to Jaipur. Understanding the elements that affect responsible tourism in these areas is crucial for encouraging community involvement and environmental conservation, especially in light of the increased interest in sustainable tourism practices. Using a non-probability sampling technique, 200 participants—tourists, locals, and tourism operators—were chosen to provide a variety of perspectives on responsible tourism practices. Structured questionnaires were utilised to gather data, emphasising aspects including cultural preservation, community involvement, environmental consciousness, and financial gains.

Chapter 6: Community-Driven Rural Tourism: Lessons from Madla Village, India

Development of rural tourism destinations requires a very different approach, as it needs development on one hand and on the other, one needs to make sure the destination does not lose its rural charm. This chapter examines the transformational possibilities of community-driven rural tourism through the case of Madla Village, India nationally acknowledged Best Tourism Village. Madla is a village near the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Khajuraho. Madla has transformed from being an isolated village that no one would want to visit to

winning the Best Tourism Village award in the gold category, demonstrating how rural tourism can be promoted via community engagement, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. The chapter discusses major initiatives such as rural homestays, local tours, ethical souvenirs, and eco-friendly activities that have benefited the local community and improved the tourism experience.

Chapter 7: Sustainability in Tourism and Hospitality: Strategies for Resource Conservation in Rural Destinations

This study examines strategies for promoting sustainable tourism and hospitality in rural areas with an emphasis on resource conservation. Rural tourism creates economic benefits. But they can also pose a threat to ecosystems if not managed properly. The survey examined key initiatives such as green habitats, renewable energy, water, waste management, and agritourism development emphasis on community participation in government policy and cooperation between the public and private sectors to promote sustainable development. The study also highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge and technology in developing responsible tourism. Data will be collected qualitatively and quantitatively through case studies using mixed methods.

Chapter 8: Harmony in Celebration: Nurturing Destination Sustainability through Green Festivals (New Direction in Responsible Rural Tourism)

As global awareness of environmental challenges intensifies, the events and tourism industries are undergoing a paradigm shift towards sustainability. While festivals attract millions of tourists worldwide with their vibrant energy and cultural immersion, their burgeoning popularity often masks a hidden cost: environmental degradation. This chapter explores how green festivals can transcend mere entertainment to become catalysts for positive change.

The chapter begins by dissecting the concept of destination sustainability, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic dimensions. It then delves into the unique attributes of green festivals, examining their potential to mitigate environmental impacts, promote local culture, and stimulate economic growth.

Chapter 9: Role of Community in the Development of Conducive Destination Bicycle Tourism in Rural Areas

Bicycle tourism is a key solution for environmental conservation and sustainability in destinations at rural destinations. This chapter examines the role of community in the development of bicycle tourism through the comparative analysis of advanced nations and India. For this study, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted to examine the community involvement towards bicycle tourism development in selected advanced nations and India. The recent developments in bicycle infrastructure, policies, and strategies implemented by selected advanced nations were also reviewed.

Chapter 10: Economic Growth vs. Environmental Sustainability: Analyzing the Impact of Kachchh Rann Utsav on Environmental Issues

The Kachchh Rann Utsav is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. This study aims to investigate the complex correlation between economic growth and environmental concerns in the context of this event. The study suggests that the emphasis for development by the stakeholders should be on beach development, botanical gardens, greater facilities for wildlife preservation, and secure safaris and expeditions. The government should

work on environmental issues, as economic development leads to pollution due to overcrowding, noise, plastic pollution, and wastage. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for shaping policies and decision-making processes aimed at fostering sustainable tourism development and environmental preservation in Kchchh and other comparable tourist locations.

Chapter 11: Art Tourism and Tribal Entrepreneurship Development through Gond Art in Madhya Pradesh: A Case Study of Patangarh Village.

The attributes and skills of entrepreneurs are essential for fostering industrial expansion, eliminating poverty through self-employment, and creating job opportunities for others. Rural development is becoming more connected with entrepreneurship, which is considered a driving economic force that may contribute to sustaining and enhancing life for those in rural areas. Tourism mainly comprises small entrepreneurs and plays an important role in the growth of the tourism sector. Entrepreneurship has grown in significance, particularly in rural areas, since it is considered a primary driving force behind rural tourism. Painting is one of the most delicate works of Art, expressing human ideas and feelings via colours and designs. Indian paintings depict the country's diverse culture and traditions.

Chapter 12: Sustainable Tourism Development through a Comprehensive Approach: Evidence from Natural Attractions of Sunamganj, Bangladesh

This chapter aims to examine the scope for sustainable tourism development in Sunamganj, Bangladesh, by using its natural resources with local community involvement and introducing appropriate policies. The objective is to create an extensive understanding of the subject through a framework that supports eco-friendly tourism in the areas while keeping in view socio-cultural and economic factors. This is a mixed-methods study that combines both qualitative and quantitative data. The main factual data is obtained through on-the-spot surveys, interviews, and feedback from 60 tourists. The analysis draws on secondary data from extant literature, government reports, and case studies of sustainable tourism. Research results showed that though Sunamganj has natural attractions such as Niladri Lake, Tanguar Haor, Jadukata River, Biki Bil, and Shimul Bagan, due to a lack of infrastructure and policy support, tourism in Sunamganj remains undeveloped. But there is a vast scope for ecotourism and community activities that could benefit the local population.

Chapter 13: Empowering Community Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism through Digital Marketing in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, people living in rural areas are comparatively less involved in tourism development, and rural tourism hasn't yet flourished. This chapter's primary objective is to examine the significance of Digital Marketing in empowering local/community entrepreneurs in rural tourism in Bangladesh. It is a systematic literature review based on secondary data from previous literature, including case studies. The findings reflect the challenges local/community entrepreneurs face in rural tourism, including inadequate Infrastructure, Lack of Finance, Inadequate Technology Support, Lack of Organized Markets, too many intermediaries, Urban Elites, and Less education and literacy. This is where Digital marketing can fit as a tool to reduce the barriers and create rural entrepreneurs who can play a role in creating a sustainable tourist destination. The key themes are the social divide in empowerment, barriers in community-based rural tourism entrepreneurship, digital marketing to support entrepreneurship in rural tourism, digital marketing to reduce the barriers, and other limitations that hinder rural entrepreneurial initiatives in the tourism sector. In addition, the study explores the potential of digital marketing tools like Social Media marketing, such

as Facebook and YouTube, in terms of knowledge, management skills, language development, and reaching and engaging with tourists and tourism stakeholders.

Chapter 14: Promoting Kelantanese Culinary Heritage Through Homestay Programs: A Review

This study explores the potential of Kelantan's traditional food in enhancing homestay programs in Kelantan, Malaysia. It identifies a gap in the current homestay offerings, which have yet to fully leverage their local culinary heritage as a core attraction for both local and international tourists. The homestay programs have not positioned Kelantan's traditional food as a key cultural product, nor have they developed activities that highlight these foods as an integral part of the homestay experience. This research aims to assess how traditional foods can be utilized to promote food tourism through homestay programs.

Chapter 15: Serving the Countryside through Green Marketing Tools: Role of Environmental Advertising, Eco-Labels and Eco-Brands

In order to ensure that the tourism industry contributes to environmental sustainability, particularly in rural areas, this study aims to investigate the connection between green marketing strategies (such as environmental advertising, eco-labels, and eco-brands) and the environmentally conscious purchasing habits of tourists visiting these areas. The data was collected from Raipur, and SPSS was used for the data analysis. EFA and CFA were used to identify and validate the factors (green marketing tools) that influence tourists' purchase behaviour.

Chapter 16: Impact of Rural Tourism and Ecotourism on the Economic Development of Local Communities

Tourism is the fastest-growing industry and plays an important role in the economic development of a country. There are different alternative forms of tourism, such as adventure tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, rural tourism, etc. Among them, rural tourism and ecotourism are the most important forms of tourism and play a prominent role in rural development, agricultural development, and conservation of natural heritage. This chapter will explore the impact of rural tourism and ecotourism on the economic development of local communities and how both forms help to create employment opportunities for local people and the comprehensive development of local communities. Rural Tourism and Ecotourism offer an alternative source of livelihood for rural people and engage them as active stakeholders in the tourism process.

Chapter 17: Rural Responsible Tourism: A Catalyst for Sustainable Development

This chapter examines rural responsible tourism through a detailed analysis of case studies from various regions, focusing on the intersection of sustainability, community involvement, and rural development. Using the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework and Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) as theoretical lenses, the study explores how tourism initiatives in rural areas can generate positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Key case studies include Kumbalangi Village in Kerala, India, where community-driven tourism has preserved local traditions while creating employment; Phu Loc, Vietnam, which highlights poverty alleviation through eco-friendly tourism; and Mawlynnong Village in Meghalaya, India, showcasing cleanliness and ecological preservation as integral components of sustainable tourism.

Chapter 18: Impact Assessment of Agri-Tourism Initiatives on Local Community: Insights from an Indian state

This study investigates the multifaceted impacts of Sula Wines' Agri-tourism initiatives in Nasik, Maharashtra, India. The primary objectives are to analyse the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental effects of Sula Wines' endeavours on the local community. Nasik in India, renowned for its vineyards and wine production, serves as the study area, offering insights into the dynamics of Agri-tourism in a rural setting. The methodology employed in this research involves primary data collection from local residents, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the community's perceptions and experiences regarding Sula Wines' Agri-tourism initiatives. Descriptive analysis techniques are utilized to explore and interpret the gathered data, providing valuable insights into the various impacts of Sula Wines' activities.

Chapter 19: Sustainable Development Through Community-Based Rural Tourism: A Case Study of Konkan Region of Maharashtra

In recent years, the vision of "Viksit Bharat" has gained momentum as a transformative movement aimed at propelling India toward sustainable development and holistic growth. Central to this vision is the burgeoning potential of tourism in India, which not only showcases the country's rich cultural heritage and diverse landscapes but also serves as a catalyst for economic progress and environmental stewardship. As one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors globally, tourism in India presents a unique opportunity to leverage natural and cultural assets while promoting sustainability. By embracing responsible tourism practices, India can enhance its attractiveness as a travel destination while ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend to local communities and ecosystems. Sustainable development, which balances economic growth with environmental preservation and social equity, is crucial in this context. Consequently, aligning the objectives of Viksit Bharat with sustainable tourism practices can foster a resilient economy, preserve India's ecological and cultural wealth, and ultimately contribute to the well-being of future generations.

Chapter 20: The Role of Tour Guides in Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development and Responsible Practices in Rural Areas

Tourism is a multifaceted industry and requires the cooperation of various actors. In order to achieve a successful tourism performance in destinations, each actor should fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the best way possible. Tour guides are also a bridge and intermediary in the tourism system. They operate across all sectors of the tourism industry and engage with nearly all stakeholders, maintaining direct contact with both visitors and those they are visiting. Therefore, tourist guides, who are among the most prominent and key actors in the tourism industry, have important duties. One of these is the contribution of tour guides to sustainability. From this point of view, the book chapter aims to contribute to understanding the impact and importance of tour guides in sustainable tourism development in rural areas.

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CHAPTER 1

Transforming Rural Landscapes: The Role of Farm Tourism in Haryana's Socio-Economic Development

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Abstract: Haryana, known as the “Land of Farmers,” is a pioneering state in farm tourism in India. At various points in time over the years, various aspects of life in Haryana—the social and cultural—have become important tourist attractions, and, nowadays, Agri-tourism is considered a major sector. Haryana, being an agriculture leader, formally announced the Farm Tourism scheme on World Tourism Day on September 27, 2003. This scheme is based on a public-private Partnership model, aimed to promote rural culture and agriculture practices. The government amended this scheme in 2024 for strengthening farm tourism by introducing modern facilities, Agri practices, cooked food, accommodation facilities, and culture performances *etc.* This paper is an attempt to explore the social and economic impacts of the farm tourism sector in the state of Haryana. For gathering the information, primary data was used along with secondary sources from news articles, journals, research papers, government websites, and social media platforms. Primary data was obtained through interviews with the visitors to the farms of Haryana. Qualitative analysis of data has been done using NVivo software. At the end, this chapter provides implications for policymakers, farm owners, visitors, tourism operators and community members.

Keywords: Agriculture practices, Agri-tourism, Culture, Economic development, Farm tourism, Haryana, Social development.

INTRODUCTION

Farm tourism, a subset of rural tourism, is emerging as a significant contributor to rural development by linking traditional agricultural practices with tourism activities. In India, Farm tourism is a segment of rural tourism; it is emerging quickly as an important activity in rural development by linking the ancient farming practices with tourism activities. These activities can provide an alternate

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income source for farmers and strengthen the rural economy by attracting customers, the urban dwellers seeking experience with agricultural lifestyles and heritage (Chadda & Bhakare, 2012). Agriculture-tourism destinations in the state of Haryana are indeed on the rise due to the rich agriculture in the state and the immediate proximity of metropolitan cities, especially Delhi. Some of the well-known farms are Surajgarh Farms, Pratapgarh Farms, Vedic Gram, *etc.*, which provide an authentic rural experience by depicting Haryanvi culture, traditional food, and several recreational activities based on agriculture (Yadav, 2017). Pratapgarh Farms also received national attention as a hosting site for G20 delegates in March 2023. The event highlighted the role of Pratapgarh Farms as a cultural ambassador and destination for international tourism (The Tribune, March 10, 2023).

Current trends depict the development of farm tourism in India. Rural tourism, which incorporates farm tourism, accounts for 4% of the tourism economy of India. It has grown by about 15% per year for the past ten years (Ministry of Tourism, 2023). Haryana, being centrally located near the capital, is visited by national as well as international tourists looking to experience the culture as well as agritourism. According to a report issued by the Haryana Tourism Department, farm tourism alone generates around 12% of the total revenue that the rural sector receives for tourism in the state. That indicates how significant this activity is for reviving the economy of the state (Haryana Tourism Department, 2023).

This study explores the social and economic impacts of farm tourism in Haryana, focusing on destinations that represent the state's rural culture and heritage. Such destinations have been in high demand among tourists and have contributed to the development of regional tourism. Their cultural and economic importance is further emphasized by national recognition, such as hosting important events like accommodating international delegates in the G20 summit that was held in March 2023 (Ministry of Tourism, 2023). In the same year, the report of the Haryana Tourism Department underlined rural tourism destinations as prototypes for the sustainable development of rural tourism, focusing on employment generation and income for the local population (Haryana Tourism Department, 2022). This chapter analyzes farm tourism in the context of economic benefits, employment generation, and social change for broader impacts in rural areas of Haryana.

Understanding Farm Tourism

Today, the farm tourism niche has gained much popularity as the urban population increasingly seeks authentic experiences in rural areas to improve their knowledge of farming and heritage (Tew & Barbieri, 2012). Farm tourism is also interchangeably known as Agri-tourism. This refers to visiting working farms or

agricultural areas for educational, recreational, or leisure purposes (Phillip, Hunter, & Blackstock, 2010). Those offered usually involved farm stays and agricultural tours and participation in farming activities, which let visitors experience rural life customs and local food production mechanisms (Carpio, Wohlgenant & Boonsaeng, 2008). Customarily, a farming activity remains a form of sustainable tourism because it can sustain rural regions' economic power, besides increasing income diversification opportunities for farmers while preserving an old farming culture (Rambo, 2017). According to Lane (1994), agritourism might be used for rural development since it offers an alternative source of income earning avenue besides retaining youth in the countryside and promoting local products. Research also shows that farm tourism can help produce mutualism between the rural and urban communities by enhancing social capital and inspiring people to live a greener, rural livelihood (Kizos & Iosifides, 2007; Roberts & Hall, 2001).

Farm tourism has emerged as a multidimensional approach that transcends leisure activity to include aspects of rural sustainability, economic development, and culture preservation. A number of scholars have studied the different benefits and implications of this phenomenon. According to Lane and Kastenholz (2015), farm tourism holds economic importance as it stabilizes rural economies through the influx of tourists and supplementary sources of income for farmers. Schilling *et al.* (2012) emphasized that agritourism has great educational value by bridging the gap between the urban and rural populations since it provides insight into agricultural processes and raises awareness of sustainability in the countryside. As per the study of Sharpley and Vass (2006), it supports the conservation of traditional farming methods while raising the environmental consciousness of the visitors. In addition, Pretty *et al.* (2007) highlighted the psychological and health benefits of interacting with green spaces and emphasized the healing potential of such interaction for urban dwellers. In terms of culture, George and Reid (2005) have argued that rural tourism, such as farm tourism, is a vital tool for cultural heritage preservation and promotion. They contended that this form of tourism strengthens rural identities and facilitates cultural exchange. These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted value of farm tourism, highlighting its potential to drive rural development, promote sustainability, and bridge the rural-urban divide.

India and Farm Tourism

In India, the farm tourism sector is becoming increasingly prominent; a growing number of states also advocate for farm tourism in pursuit of rural development and culture preservation (Sarkar, 2010). The opportunity to experience rural life, engage with traditional farming practices, and immerse oneself in the local culture

Responsible Tourism in Vettaikaranpudur, Tamil Nadu – A Case Study on Rural Tourism Destination

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Abstract: Responsible Tourism (RT) is an approach that respects the environment, local community, and culture of any tourist destination, thereby creating sustainable tourism development in the destination. It facilitates tourists in making a deeper connection with the host community and comprehending cultural, social, and economic issues. The post-pandemic has resulted in a growing interest, particularly in rural destinations where nature, culture, and heritage are not being affected by traditional mass tourism activity. Realising the necessity of responsible tourism, researchers have considered one such rural tourism village: Vettaikaranpudur, recently awarded as the Best Tourism Village by the Government of India (GoI), which has been selected as the study area to explore the viability and implementation of responsible practices for sustainable development. Ethnographic analysis, a qualitative methodology, has been employed to learn the implications of RT on the local community. Findings from the study help in designing a case study on rural destination and shed light on the influencing factors of responsible tourism. The research work also highlights the challenges and suggests measures to promote more responsible rural tourism at the destination. The implications of the study extend beyond Vettaikaranpudur and can be applied to similar rural destinations.

Keywords: Best village, Cultural heritage, Eco-cultural, Environmental conservation, Host community, Quality of life, Responsible tourism, Sustainability, Sustainable development goals, Tourism development, Tourism stakeholders.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism involves the movement of people from their usual environment to other places for leisure, business, cultural, spiritual, medical, or other purposes. It is an economic activity, focused on maximising visitor satisfaction and profits generated through related services. The growth of mass tourism since the mid-20th century has drawn considerable criticism regarding environmental degradation, cultural erosion, and disruption of local communities. These impacts led to the adoption of sustainability as a core framework for tourism development since the 1990s. Among various forms of tourism that were evolving over the years, rural tourism is one that gained momentum, recently, after the COVID-19 pandemic, where there has been a shift in the travel behaviour of tourists to escape from mundane life. The pandemic has also brought attention to the harm caused by mass tourism, which has long been a topic of discussion, as well as requests to switch to other alternative tourism activities. Compared to alternative/conventional forms, rural tourism has some advantages that lower the danger of infection, such as non-polluted air and tranquillity, less crowd and social interaction, easy social separation, and smaller accommodation facilities (Coros *et al.*, 2021). A significant portion of India comprises rural areas where visitors can experience the essence of the country. Rural tourism complements a range of supplementary activities, such as employment and retention, and the creation of new entrepreneurial prospects. These go in line with national initiatives like “Atmanirbhar Bharat” and “Vocal for Local” (Rural Tourism, 2024). While sustainability can be found in a wide range of social contexts, it aims to protect the resources essential for human life and secure a better future for future generations. At every level, sustainable tourism incorporates environmental awareness, economic efficiency, and social responsibility. Several definitions, including soft tourism, eco-tourism, nature-based tourism, and rural tourism, are employed in this context (Beyhan & Unugur, 2010).

The quality of life of the local community in rural tourism destinations has been boosted with entrepreneurial opportunities provided by the tourism industry, thus shifting the dependence of the economy from mere agricultural activities to tourism. Each rural area is unique in displaying its own tangible and intangible heritage properties like arts, crafts, culture, tradition, and customs followed as their way of living. Any type of tourism, if not undertaken responsibly by the tourists, may have a wide range of negative impacts that may be irreversible. The evolution of responsible tourism is closely associated with the emergence of sustainability issues within the global tourism discourse. To address these problems, responsible tourism came into existence; it was meant to keep the industry under further control of the concerns. Responsible tourism became

formalized in the 1990s. RT has been inculcated to minimize harm and maximize positive contributions to the host communities by tourism operators, policymakers, and tourists with ethical responsibility. As per the “Cape Town Declaration, 2002,” Responsible Tourism (RT) is identified as a form of travel that fosters improved living conditions and provides enriching experiences for visitors. It has evolved into a more inclusive framework that encourages industry stakeholders and tourists to adopt more conscientious practices (García-Hernández *et al.*, 2021). By the early 2000s, responsible tourism had evolved from a niche interest to a central element of mainstream tourism development. Krunić *et al.* (2020) note that the introduction of concepts like ecotourism, Community-Based Tourism (CBT), and cultural tourism has enriched the scope of RT, increasing emphasis on greater participation of local communities, environmental protection, and cultural sensitivity. The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism was adopted by the UNWTO in 1999, which constitutes an important milestone in the global institutionalization of responsible tourism practices.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA: VETTAIKARANPUDUR

Vettaikaranpudur is a panchayat town located in Pollachi taluk of Coimbatore district, in Tamil Nadu, India. The village, located 16 kilometers from Pollachi town, is nestled at the foothills of the Anamalai amidst vast coconut plantations (As represented in Fig. 1). The Village has been recognised as “The Best Tourism Village-2023” under the bronze category by the Rural Tourism division, Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India (GoI). The Vettaikaranpudur Panchayat has a total of six villages, including Sethumadai, Kaliapuram, Odayakulam, Devipatinam, Sarkarpati, and Vettaikaranpudur itself. The villages comprise Tamil-speaking locals and tribal communities, including the Malasar and Kadar tribes. These groups contribute significantly to preserving local traditions and managing eco-tourism activities. Agriculture is the primary livelihood, with coconut, banana, and areca nut being the main crops. Livestock rearing and eco-tourism have emerged as alternative income sources, particularly for tribal families. Easy access to destinations such as Aliyar Reservoir, Masani Amman Koil, Topslip, and Valparai, Vettaikaranpudur is carving a niche for itself with its peaceful retreats and scenic beauty.

Cultural Showcase

The villages are famed for cultural attractions like Alukku Swami Siddhar Koil and events like Goat fights, Rekla, and Horse races. Sarkarpathi, a small hamlet located near Vettaikaranpudur, is home to indigenous tribal communities. These tribes live harmoniously with nature and excel in making bamboo baskets, items from coconut shells, cane furniture, and other medicinal products.

CHAPTER 3

Navigating Challenges: The Role of Psychological Ownership in Tourism Entrepreneurship Intentions Among Rural Youth

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Abstract: This study explores the intricate relationship between psychological ownership, entrepreneurial challenges, and tourism entrepreneurship intention among rural youth in Himachal Pradesh, India. Rooted in the transformative potential of rural tourism entrepreneurship, the research underscores its critical role in fostering economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Psychological ownership, characterized by an emotional attachment and sense of possession toward local resources, emerges as a key motivator of entrepreneurial behavior. However, rural entrepreneurs face systemic barriers, including limited access to financial resources, skill deficits, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, which hinder their participation and success. This chapter investigates the dual role of psychological ownership as both a motivator and mediator in navigating these challenges. Drawing on a combination of psychological and structural factors, the study aims to validate the relationship between psychological ownership and tourism entrepreneurship intention, assess the influence of entrepreneurial challenges, and analyze the mediating role of psychological ownership in this interplay. Himachal Pradesh's unique socio-cultural and geographical context serves as a backdrop to examine these dynamics. By bridging gaps in rural tourism literature, the findings provide actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners seeking to empower rural youth and promote sustainable tourism entrepreneurship. The research concludes with recommendations for fostering resilience and innovation in rural entrepreneurial ecosystems.

Keywords: Community empowerment, Cultural heritage, Entrepreneurial challenges, Psychological ownership, Rural youth, Structural barriers, Sustainable tourism development, Tourism entrepreneurship.

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INTRODUCTION

Psychological Ownership (PSO) has emerged as a pivotal construct in tourism studies, encapsulating individuals' feelings of possessiveness and emotional ties to specific destinations, cultural artifacts, or tourism initiatives. This phenomenon plays a transformative role in shaping behaviors, fostering engagement, and encouraging sustainable practices among tourists and local communities. PSO encompasses dimensions such as self-identity, responsibility, and belonging, which are instrumental in driving community participation and promoting pro-environmental behavior. For instance, in rural tourism, Community-based Psychological Ownership (C-PO) has been linked to active involvement in tourism development, with factors like self-identity and community responsibility playing significant roles (Guo *et al.*, 2024). Among tourists, PSO fosters loyalty and environmentally conscious actions, particularly in settings like homestays, where elements such as perceived control and self-investment amplify their sense of ownership (Kumar & Chandra, 2024). These insights underscore PSO's critical role in aligning tourism activities with sustainable development goals while fostering deeper connections between stakeholders and tourism resources.

Rural community tourism, as an integral part of sustainable development strategies, offers vast opportunities for economic growth and cultural preservation. However, its success hinges on the entrepreneurial intent and active involvement of local communities. Community empowerment, cultural resources, and entrepreneurial ecosystems are essential components driving tourism entrepreneurship in rural areas. Studies from diverse regions illustrate how community participation and social support enhance tourism initiatives, fostering resilience and innovation. For instance, Ecuador's community tourism projects align with the Sustainable Development Goals by integrating local populations into tourism activities and ensuring equitable benefit distribution (Maldonado-Erazo *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, rural women entrepreneurs in Southern Africa leverage cultural tourism to support livelihoods, showcasing entrepreneurial ingenuity despite challenges like limited access to technology (Makandwa *et al.*, 2023). These examples highlight the importance of tailored strategies and strong community engagement in realizing the potential of rural tourism entrepreneurship.

Despite its promise, rural tourism entrepreneurship faces multifaceted challenges, ranging from financial constraints to environmental sustainability issues. Limited access to capital, skilled human resources, and bureaucratic hurdles hinder the growth and scalability of rural tourism projects (Feng *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, urban-centric development often dilutes the authenticity of rural experiences, a key attraction for tourists. Innovative approaches offer solutions to these

challenges, such as integrating tourism with agriculture or cultural heritage. For instance, the degrowth paradigm in Iceland highlights how tourism entrepreneurs prioritize community well-being over profit, demonstrating the potential for sustainable development (Falter, 2024). However, addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the interconnected factors influencing rural tourism, alongside targeted interventions to empower local entrepreneurs and foster community participation. By leveraging psychological ownership and entrepreneurial intent, rural tourism can overcome its obstacles and contribute meaningfully to economic growth and cultural preservation.

Himachal Pradesh serves as a microcosm of rural tourism's promise and challenges. Despite its thriving tourism industry, rural communities often remain marginalized in entrepreneurial activities, with uneven benefit distribution and persistent barriers limiting their participation. While existing research has explored various aspects of tourism entrepreneurship, the intersection of psychological ownership, entrepreneurial challenges, and tourism entrepreneurship intention remains under-investigated, especially in the context of rural youth. This research gap underscores the need for a comprehensive study that not only explores the direct effects of psychological ownership and entrepreneurial challenges on tourism entrepreneurship intention but also examines the mediating role of psychological ownership in shaping entrepreneurial intentions amidst challenges.

This research aims to fill the identified gap by achieving three key objectives: (1) validating the relationship between psychological ownership and tourism entrepreneurship intention among rural youth, (2) assessing the impact of entrepreneurial challenges on tourism entrepreneurship intention, and (3) examining the role of psychological ownership as a mediator in this relationship. Thus, investigating these objectives, the study contributes to the theoretical understanding of rural entrepreneurship and offers actionable insights for policy and practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Ownership (PSO)

Psychological ownership (PSO) refers to the sense of caring and mentally associated with an object, idea, or place. In tourism, PSO fosters both community and tourist engagement. Community-based psychological ownership (C-PO) is particularly critical in rural tourism, where self-identity, belongingness, and community responsibility significantly encourage active participation in tourism development (Guan *et al.*, 2024). For example, in China, self-identity and

CHAPTER 4

Kerala's Responsible Tourism Model: A Blueprint for Sustainable Rural Tourism Development Across Indian States

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Abstract: The Kerala Responsible Tourism Mission (KRTM) Society, which involves local people, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes economic growth, has become a pioneering effort in the promotion of sustainable tourism in rural destinations. The chapter examines the success story of the society and highlights some of its primary tactics, such as eco-friendly operations, community-based tourism, and skill-development initiatives that have empowered local stakeholders in the rural areas. The chapter assesses the observable social, economic, and environmental advantages produced by the Responsible Tourism concept by looking at case studies from different rural destinations in Kerala.

In addition, the research looks at whether this approach may be replicated in other Indian states while taking into account regional variations in geography, culture, and economic status. It explores the challenges of scaling the project, including policy coherence, stakeholder involvement, and infrastructure support, and offers frameworks for modifying the model in various situations. The study comes to the conclusion that the Kerala Responsible Tourism model provides a workable and scalable framework for sustainable tourism that may support inclusive economic growth, environmental preservation, and community empowerment throughout India.

Keywords: Community development, Ecotourism, Environmental conservation, Responsible tourism, Rural tourism, Sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry has become a transformative economic sector that may support environmental sustainability, cultural interaction, and regional development. India's rural tourist industry has a lot of promise, but creative

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solutions are needed to achieve sustainable growth. Kerala's Responsible Tourism Mission (RTM) is a trailblazing concept that combines eco-friendly practices, skill-development programs, and community-based initiatives to empower local stakeholders and preserve cultural heritage (Kerala Tourism, 2024).

The RTM's capacity to strike a balance between the three pillars of sustainability—economic, social, and environmental benefits—is demonstrated by its success. The approach has established a standard for sustainable tourism in rural areas through collaborations with public and commercial players, inclusive policy frameworks, and active community participation. The Responsible Tourism framework in Kerala is examined in this study as a model that can be replicated in other Indian states. The study intends to find scalable best practices and assess their applicability to various geographical settings by examining their operational strategies and success stories.

The study also looks into the difficulties of applying Kerala's model nationally, with an emphasis on stakeholder cooperation, policy consistency, and infrastructure preparedness. Additionally, it suggests ways to modify the model to take into consideration regional differences in geography, culture, and economic standing. This study aims to contribute to larger policy conversations on rural development in India by offering practical insights into promoting equitable economic growth and environmental preservation through sustainable tourism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Due to its direct impact on national societies' social, cultural, educational, and economic facets as well as their international relations, World Tourism (1980) classified tourism as an activity that is vital to national life. Alternative ideas, including Sustainable Tourism, Green Tourism, Eco Tourism, Pro-Poor Tourism, Accessible Tourism, and Responsible Tourism, have been introduced as a result of the growing need for sustainability in the development of the tourism industry.

Scholars in the tourism field have given the idea of responsible tourism a lot of thought (Mihalic, 2016). Responsible tourism is a tourism program that aims to improve vacation experiences, local residents' quality of life, socioeconomic benefits, and the preservation of natural resources in tourist areas in order to provide favourable commercial prospects (Spenceley, 2010). The idea has gained popularity in tourist literature when its significance in expanding economic prospects in the industry was recognized (Hafiz M & *et al.*, 2014).

Fostering responsible behavior appeared to be the greatest strategy for sustainable tourism, as evidenced by a study on responsible behavior among community-based tourists that found that responsible tourism practices might increase tourism

and enhance tourist sites (Lee, T.H. & *et al.*, 2013). According to Pirlone and Spadaro, responsible tourism practices are a manifestation of protecting the environment, local customs, and culture, as well as the active engagement of those working to develop sustainable tourism (Pirlone, F. & Spadaro, I., 2017).

Furthermore, a number of academics claimed that sustainable tourism practices were crucial to the viability of the location. In essence, tourist destinations were communities of specific stakeholders impacted by tourism activities (Chan *et al.*, 2015; Gong *et al.*, 2019; Mathew *et al.*, 2017; Koshy *et al.*, 2016). Thus, it was impossible to create sustainable tourist sites without taking host communities' opinions on the effects of tourism into account (Safshekan, *et al.*, 2020).

In order to gauge the sustainability of a destination, several academics looked into how host communities see it. For instance, Lee and Jan used host communities' perspectives as a tool to create tourist plans (Lee, T.H. & Jan, F.H., 2019). Additionally, a number of academics looked at destination sustainability using host communities' perceptions of responsible tourism practices as an indicator (Mathew, *et al.*, 2017).

Planning and managing the tourism industry requires the use of Sustainable Tourism Indicators (STIs) (Rasoolimanesh, Ramakrishna, Hall, Esfandiar, & Seyfi, 2023). Sustainable and responsible tourism development protects and increases future opportunities while satisfying the needs of present tourists and host communities (Uchinlayen, Sarker, & Saha, 2022). Negative sentiments toward tourism have been brought on by the monopolistic control of the industry's growth. By implementing a responsible tourism policy, this problem can be avoided. Responsible traveling to places that don't negatively impact the environment or local communities is the foundation of sustainable tourism (Ekpah, 2021).

The terms “green tourism,” “sustainable tourism,” “alternative tourism,” “eco-tourism,” and “fair-trade tourism” are commonly used in tourism development (Stanford, 2006). Compared to other tourist concepts like eco-tourism, green tourism, and sustainable tourism, responsible tourism is distinct. Sustainable concepts are founded on the triple bottom line idea, whereas eco-tourism and green tourism are centered on the environmental area. Local community development, ownership, and environmental preservation are the main goals of responsible tourism. The four primary facets of responsible tourism are environmental, cultural, social, and economic. In terms of all parties involved, alternative tourism has become a socially and environmentally sensitive type of travel. “Responsible Tourism” is the ideal substitute for alternative tourism (Sariskumar & Bhavan, 2018).

Evaluating the Key Determinants of Responsible Rural Tourism

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Abstract: This study investigates the main factors influencing responsible rural tourism in the well-known Indian rural communities of Amber and Bassi, which are close to Jaipur. Understanding the elements that affect responsible tourism in these areas is crucial for encouraging community involvement and environmental conservation, especially in light of the increased interest in sustainable tourism practices. Using a non-probability sampling technique, 200 participants—tourists, locals, and tourism operators—were chosen to provide a variety of perspectives on responsible tourism practices. Structured questionnaires were utilised to gather data, emphasising aspects including cultural preservation, community involvement, environmental consciousness, and financial gains. Factor analysis was used for data analysis. The results offer important new information to local people, tourism businesses, and policymakers by highlighting several crucial elements that have a substantial impact on responsible rural tourism in Amber and Bassi. The research adds to the body of knowledge on responsible tourism by emphasising these factors and provides a framework for improving the development of sustainable tourism in rural areas.

Keywords: Community involvement, Cultural preservation, Economic growth , Responsible rural tourism, Sustainable tourism.

INTRODUCTION

In order to create a new social balance between the urban and rural areas, rural tourism seeks to accomplish local sustainable development and adequately address the leisure demands of contemporary society. Rural tourism has a significant positive impact on the traditional rural economy, which is centered on forestry, crafts, agriculture, and other industries. There is no denying that rural

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tourism creates new jobs and supports both new and current businesses. Therefore, as demonstrated by the diversification of economic activity and earnings in rural areas, rural tourism is essential to rural development. In addition, it promotes the conservation and preservation of rural cultural heritage, increases opportunities for women and people with disabilities, the preservation of the environment and biodiversity, and supports other initiatives. The company should use systems to draw in the proper visitors and efficiently oversee the growing number of rural tourism destinations in order to achieve its objective of becoming a tourist center for a range of niches and producing higher returns.

Human activity in a rural area that is centered on land-based economies, particularly farming and agriculture, is known as rural tourism. There has been much discussion in the literature over what constitutes rural tourism, but no clear agreement has been reached. Second, not all tourism that takes place in rural areas is strictly “rural”—it can be urban in form and simply be located in a rural area; third, different types of rural tourism have developed in different regions, making it difficult to find characteristics that are common to all of the countries; and finally, it is difficult to define rural areas where rural tourism occurs because the criteria used by different nations vary greatly. “A state of mind, and technically, according to activities, destinations, and other measurable, tangible characteristics” is a broad definition of it. The activities that fall under the umbrella of rural tourism have been continuously expanded upon by researchers over time. Interests in farms, the outdoors, adventure, health, education, the arts, and heritage are all experiencing living history, including local traditions, folklore, customs, beliefs, and shared heritage in rural areas. “It is situated in rural areas, functionally rural; based on small-scale and traditional activities and enterprises (rural in scale), relies on the traditional qualities of the countryside, develops slowly under the control of local people, and is non-uniform (reflecting the complexity of the rural environment) are the main characteristics that define rural tourism. In essence, rural tourism is any activity that occurs in a rural area. It has several facets and might include ecotourism, adventure tourism, natural tourism, cultural tourism, and farm/agricultural tourism.

Unless classified as such, rural tourism typically possesses the following characteristics: experience-oriented, mostly conducted in natural settings, sparsely populated, coupled with local events and seasonality, and placing emphasis on the preservation of culture, heritage, and customs. Located close to Jaipur, Rajasthan, the famous rural settlements of Amber and Bassi are fine examples of how rural tourism can help sustain the local economy while also preserving the cultural heritage. Amber is approached as one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, famed for its Amber fort, attracting thousands of tourists every year. Beyond the fort, Amber's countryside has come up as an oasis with an amalgamation of

cultural and historical events. Visitors can join workshops by local artisans and participate in traditional Rajasthan crafts such as pottery and block printing, which are in addition to educational events about Bassi, which holds the glamour of Rajasthan for its vivacious handicrafts and culture. Said village offers folk songs and dances, as well as insight into the agricultural practices of rural life. Tourists may engage in rural walks, interact with locals, and observe the processes of traditional Rajasthani textile and jewelry making. Nearby, Bassi Wildlife Sanctuary appeals to nature-based tourism with its diverse flora and fauna, adding another ecological dimension to rural tourism. Amber and Bassi epitomize how rural tourism promotes sustainable development through environmental conservation or cultural preservation. Make these experiences a genuine cultural interchange for the tourists who contribute towards strengthening the local economy. Further, such initiatives can ease the burden of urban overtourism for Jaipur by distributing tourist traffic more evenly among its rural counterparts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Baloch *et al.* (2022) explore the determinants of responsible tourism behavior through the lens of supply chain dynamics, emphasizing the roles of institutional policies, eco-friendly infrastructure, community involvement, tourism services, human resource development, and tourist satisfaction. Drawing from theoretical frameworks such as the Theory of Planned Behavior and Value Chain Analysis, the study synthesizes insights from prior research to construct and validate a structural model using data from 700 respondents in Pakistan. Their findings indicate that factors like community support, institutional quality, and infrastructure significantly influence responsible tourism behavior, offering valuable implications for sustainable tourism governance. The research contributes to the literature by integrating behavioral and supply-chain perspectives, although it highlights the need for future studies to examine cross-cultural variations, digital influences, and long-term causal effects in tourism sustainability efforts.

Iaromenko and Kryszak (2024) conducted a bibliometric analysis of 933 Scopus-indexed journal articles to identify the key drivers and emerging research trends in rural tourism development, focusing on influencing factors such as public goods, infrastructure access, demand–supply determinants, value-chain constraints, and spatial dynamics in rural. Their use of VOSviewer and Bibliometrix tools revealed increasing scholarly attention to rural tourism sustainability, community-based tourism models, and infrastructure’s role in enabling access to destinations. The study highlights spatial dependencies impacting tourism policy decisions and calls for systematic categorization of determinants from both demand-side and supply-

Community-Driven Rural Tourism: Lessons from Madla Village, India

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Abstract: Rural Tourism is one of the fast-growing sectors. Development of rural tourism destinations requires a very different approach, as it needs development on one hand, and on the other, you need to make sure the destination does not lose its rural charm. This chapter examines the transformational possibilities of community-driven rural tourism through the case of Madla Village, India nationally acknowledged Best Tourism Village. Madla is a village near the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Khajuraho. Madla has transformed from being an isolated village that no one would want to visit to winning the Best Tourism Village award in the gold category, demonstrating how rural tourism can be promoted *via* community engagement, cultural preservation, and sustainable development. The chapter discusses major initiatives such as rural homestays, local tours, ethical souvenirs, and eco-friendly activities that have benefited the local community and improved the tourism experience. It also emphasizes the role of government, the private sector, and multi-stakeholder engagement in developing tourism while maintaining economic stability and environmental sustainability. By analyzing Madla's development strategies, this chapter provides valuable insights into how rural tourism can be harnessed to promote local livelihoods, preserve cultural heritage, and foster inclusive growth. Lessons from Madla Village can serve as a model for other rural villages in India and abroad, aiming to achieve sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Best tourism village, Community-driven rural tourism, Madla village, Rural tourism, Stakeholder engagement, Sustainable tourism.

INTRODUCTION

UN Tourism defines Rural Tourism as a form of tourism where the visitor's experience encompasses diverse offerings typically associated with nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle and culture, fishing, and sightseeing (UN Tourism, no date). In earlier days, people lived rural lifestyles and were close to

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nature, but now, due to urbanization, they are cut off from nature and want to experience rural settings. It makes rural tourism popular nowadays. However, without proper monitoring, tourism to rural areas can be devastating. Thus, the world is discussing sustainable tourism, which advocates for minimal harmful environmental and community impacts. Sustainable rural tourism advocates local community involvement. The community must take pride in its rural resources, and only then can sustainable rural tourism be possible. For this, it is important that the local community benefits from tourism. Thus, community-driven approaches are necessary for rural tourism development.

In developing countries like India, rural tourism can be a tool for development. According to an economic survey in 2021, 65 percent of India's population resided in rural areas, and 47 percent relied on agriculture for their living (PIB Delhi, 2023). It gives India an excellent opportunity to develop and promote rural tourism. The Ministry of Tourism, with this view, focuses on rural tourism, aligning it with the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Vocal for Local,' which promotes the use of domestic resources instead of international ones. Rural tourism can bring social and economic development by providing jobs to rural communities. Rural Tourism India is a central nodal agency established by the Ministry of Tourism India, which utilizes India's rural legacy to develop a dynamic and sustainable tourism sector by offering immersive rural experiences, consequently fostering indigenous employment and safeguarding local culture and heritage. It creates a supportive environment where government, industry, NGOs, and the community can come together and develop and promote rural tourism in the country. India's major rural tourism products and services are arts and culture, agri-tourism, homestays, eco-tourism, wildlife tourism, and tribal tourism. Under this agency, more than 222 rural homestays and 400 rural tourism villages are established to promote tourism in rural areas. The agency has also started the Best Rural Homestay and Best Tourism Village competitions to incorporate a sense of competitiveness among stakeholders. This chapter discusses the case of Madla Village, Madhya Pradesh, which is the gold awardee of the Best Tourism Village competition. According to the Population Census (2011), Madla village is in the Panna tehsil of the Panna district in Madhya Pradesh, India. It is located 20 km from Panna, the district and sub-district headquarters of Madla village. The total number of available accommodation units is 52, with 550 beds. The categories of lodging include homestays, hotels, and resorts. We have chosen Madla as a case because it presents a great example of local and economic development tools through rural tourism in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural tourism and Sustainable Development

Rural tourism has seen a significant transformation over time. Earlier, people considered tourism a leisure activity, promoting visits to well-established destinations, and rural tourism was limited to casual visits, which needed more proper infrastructure. Over time, the government and other policymakers recognized its potential to address issues like relocating rural populations to urban settings, unemployment, and resource degradation. Rural tourism fosters sustainable development using rich cultural heritage, natural landscapes, and traditional rural practices (Gica *et al.*, 2021). It has to align with the global emphasis on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like poverty alleviation, environmental conservation, and gender equality (Peña-Sánchez *et al.*, 2020). Keeping this in mind, many developing nations like India are integrating rural tourism into the national development agenda, showcasing its role as a sustainable economic driver (Kumar, Valeri, and Shekhar, 2021).

Local Community Participation

Many studies have suggested that local community participation is essential for rural tourism's success (Rosalina, Dupre, and Wang, 2021). When involved, they work as guardians of the natural, historical, and cultural elements tourists seek. Because of their in-depth familiarity with the area, they can create tourism experiences that are genuine and significant. Also, their involvement is crucial for the equitable distribution of benefits in the tourism industry; otherwise, the industry risks becoming exploitative, with earnings going to investment firms outside the country. Community-driven tourism projects cultivate a sense of ownership and responsibility within communities, enhancing tourism operations' quality and sustainability (Thomas, 2024).

However, the participation of communities also presents challenges. It necessitates capacity development, awareness enhancement, and the surmounting of socio-cultural obstacles (Tabatabaei, Oshriyeh, and Beldona, 2024). Locals may initially oppose tourism due to cultural erosion or environmental degradation concerns. When enabled, communities may significantly influence the development of tourist initiatives that reflect their values and goals.

CHAPTER 7

Sustainability in Tourism and Hospitality: Strategies for Resource Conservation in Rural Destinations

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Abstract: This study examines strategies for promoting sustainable tourism and hospitality in rural areas with an emphasis on resource conservation. Rural tourism creates economic benefits. But they can also pose a threat to ecosystems if not managed properly. The survey examined key initiatives such as green habitats, renewable energy, water, waste management, and agri tourism development emphasis on community participation in government policy and cooperation between the public and private sectors to promote sustainable development. The study also highlights the importance of indigenous knowledge and technology in developing responsible tourism. Data will be collected qualitatively and quantitatively through case studies using mixed methods. Survey with local officials, Interviews with policy makers and tourists. Statistical analysis is used to measure the impact of sustainable practices on resource conservation, while thematic analysis will identify best practices. The findings provide useful guidance in striking a balance between tourism development and environmental protection in rural areas.

Keywords: Community participation, Eco-tourism, Environmental sustainability, Resource conservation, Rural destination, Tourism and hospitality.

INTRODUCTION

The sustainability of tourism and hospitality has become an important issue in recent years, especially in the context of rural destinations. The tourism industry, despite its important role in the world economy, is often criticized for its environmental, social, and cultural impacts. Most rural areas serve as attractive

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destinations because of their natural beauty. Cultural heritage and tranquility are especially vulnerable to the negative impacts of uncontrolled tourism development. Waste of resources and loss of cultural identity. These are just some of the challenges facing rural destinations. To solve these problems adoption of sustainable strategies aimed at conserving resources is therefore prominent. The concept of sustainability in tourism is rooted in the broad framework of sustainable development. It emphasizes meeting current needs without compromising the capabilities of future generations (Brundtland Commission, 1987). In the case of tourism and services, balancing economic, environmental, social, and cultural dimensions to ensure long-term viability is sustainable, and this balance is delicate. This is especially true for rural destinations. This is because these areas often rely on limited natural resources and on cultural assets. Resource conservation in rural tourism is the management of natural, cultural, and economic resources in a manner that minimizes losses and maximizes benefits. Resource conservation strategies range from promoting renewable energy to reducing waste to preserving local traditions and promoting community participation. The experience of using solar energy in a country house not only reduces reliance on renewable resources, but also to meet the growing demand for green tourism (Gössling & Hall, 2019). Waste management initiatives such as composting and recycling play an important role in maintaining the ecological balance of the area. Rural areas are a key driver for developing sustainable rural tourism is increasing tourists' awareness of the environmental and cultural impacts of their travels. Modern travelers are increasingly looking for authentic and environmentally conscious experiences. It allows them to connect with nature and local communities (Smith & Puczko, 2009). Changing consumer behavior creates opportunities for rural destinations to differentiate themselves by implementing sustainable practices such as agritourism, in which tourists participate in agricultural activities that not only conserve resources but also improve the economic and social well-being of rural communities.

But there are obstacles to overcome when putting sustainable methods into practice for rural tourism. Insufficient financial resources, Stakeholders' ignorance, and inadequate infrastructure. Adoption of sustainable techniques is frequently hampered by this. Additionally, local resources may be strained during peak periods due to the seasonality of tourism in many rural locations. Those resources are now being used less during the off-season. A multi-stakeholder approach is essential to addressing these challenges. Government and the private sector play a role in local communities, and tourists can collaborate to develop and implement effective sustainability strategies (Bramwell & Lane, 2000). This cooperative approach's main pillars are education and capacity building. Training programs for tour operators and hostesses can help them better grasp the value of sustainable practices. One such program is an effort to promote community

ownership of sustainability through workshops on energy efficiency, waste management, and water saving. Future professionals will be ready to tackle the difficulties of resource conservation if sustainability is also incorporated into tourism and hospitality education programs.

Promoting Sustainable Rural Tourism: A Global Perspective

Policy and regulatory frameworks play an important role in promoting the sustainability of rural tourism. Governments and local authorities can implement policies that promote sustainable practices, such as tax breaks for green businesses or financial assistance for community tourism projects, and strict regulations regarding waste disposal from land use and resource extraction. This is to prevent over-exploitation of rural destinations. Successful examples of such policies can be seen in countries such as Bhutan, with tourism policies ranging from smart water management systems to apps that teach tourists about local traditions and customs. The government's "high value, low impact" approach to ensuring tourism development is consistent with sustainability goals (Dorji, 2001). Efforts to preserve technological advances can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of sustainability initiatives. Construction allows obtaining additional information (Müller, 2020). Digital platforms also aid in promoting eco-friendly travel experiences. It links tourists who care about the environment with conservation-minded rural locations. Community involvement is a key component of sustainable rural tourism, including local communities in decision-making guarantees that tourist growth is in line with their goals and requirements. Community-based tourism initiatives in which local people are directly involved in providing tourism services not only promote resource conservation, but they also create economic opportunities, such as the "home stay" model in the Himalayan region of India. Helping tourists experience local culture and reducing their environmental impact through massive tourism infrastructure (Battacharya & Kumari, 2020).

Balancing Economic Growth with Environmental and Cultural Preservation

Despite the challenges in rural destinations around the sector has successfully adopted sustainable tourism practices, for instance, New Zealand's focus on ecotourism has caused the development of nature studies that emphasize environmental stewardship. (Higham & Carr, 2002) and keeping conventional farming practices in Tuscany, Italy, not simplest preserves the cultural background of the location, but also attracts tourists who seek a real experience (Bindy, 2016). The sustainability strategy that emphasizes the capacity to transform rural tourism into a model for aid conservation and community

CHAPTER 8

Harmony in Celebration: Nurturing Destination Sustainability through Green Festivals (New Direction in Responsible Rural Tourism)

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Abstract: This chapter delves into the pivotal role of green festivals in fostering destination sustainability. As global awareness of environmental challenges intensifies, the events and tourism industries are undergoing a paradigm shift towards sustainability. While festivals attract millions of tourists worldwide with their vibrant energy and cultural immersion, their burgeoning popularity often masks a hidden cost: environmental degradation. This chapter explores how green festivals can transcend mere entertainment to become catalysts for positive change.

The chapter begins by dissecting the concept of destination sustainability, emphasizing the interconnectedness of environmental, social, and economic dimensions. It then delves into the unique attributes of green festivals, examining their potential to mitigate environmental impacts, promote local culture, and stimulate economic growth. Through an analysis of successful case studies from around the world, the chapter highlights the transformative effects of incorporating sustainable practices within festival frameworks. This chapter contributes to the growing discourse on sustainability by emphasizing the critical role of green festivals. Its exploration of innovative practices and collaborative approaches adds original insights to the field.

Keywords: Circular economy, Community engagement, Destination sustainability, Environmental education, Environmental impact, Green festival, Sustainable tourism.

INTRODUCTION TO DESTINATION SUSTAINABILITY

Destination sustainability is about the long-term viability and vitality of a destination—one that takes a systematic, holistic approach to destination management. That encompasses all ingredients that contribute to the sustainability

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of a travel and tourism spot: its environmental, social, and economic components (Santos, Margarida & Veiga, *et al.*, 2022) These are often seen as interconnected themes, with the understanding that one cannot thrive if the others are failing—and that the “sweet spot” is to integrate all three for balanced, equitable growth and development.

On the environmental front, it means preserving and conserving natural resources, reducing carbon footprints, and minimizing negative impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity. That, in turn, means implementing sustainable practices such as reducing waste, conserving energy, and responsible land use to ensure that generations of visitors will be as enchanted by the local landscape as visitors today.

Destination sustainability includes not only environmental factors but also social factors, such as social justice, cultural heritage preservation, and local community well-being. It entails improving cultural diversity, encouraging community involvement, and raising the standard of living for both locals and tourists.

Moreover, the economic aspect of destination sustainability pertains to the significance of yielding financial gains while guaranteeing sustained prosperity and the just allocation of resources. This entails boosting regional economies, generating job opportunities, and encouraging eco-friendly tourist strategies that boost the economy without sacrificing the destination's character.

To achieve sustainable development, these factors must be addressed together and in a balanced way. Ignoring one component can have a negative impact on the destination's overall sustainability. To ensure the resilience and sustainability of destinations worldwide, a comprehensive strategy that incorporates environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and economic viability is essential.

Understanding Green Festivals

Festivals are significant contributors to the visitor economy at local, regional, and global scales. (Gerard, Jan, Hutte 2022). Green festivals are an important part of destination sustainability. They promote sustainable practices and raise awareness among participants and stakeholders. Green festivals serve as a platform for environmental protection, cultural and heritage preservation, and economic development in the host destination.

A green festival is an event or celebration that puts sustainability at the forefront of its planning, implementation, and results. It goes beyond entertainment and aims to reduce its impact on the environment, socialize responsibly, and make a positive impact on the host community and economy. (Sonya Graci & Rachel Dodds, 2008).

Green festivals have the potential to address several aspects of destination sustainability, such as the following:

Reduce Environmental Impact: Green festivals promote eco-friendly practices that reduce waste, recycle, compost, and conserve energy. By reducing resource consumption and pollution, green festivals can help reduce the environmental impact of large-scale events and set a good example for other events.

Encourage Local Culture and Heritage: Green festivals celebrate the unique culture and heritage of the host destinations. They highlight local traditions, arts and crafts, music, cuisine, and more. By promoting local culture and heritage, green festivals foster a sense of identity and pride among residents and visitors.

Stimulating Economic Growth: Green festivals are a great way to boost economic growth, as they attract tourists, generate revenue, and create employment opportunities for local businesses. They also provide an opportunity for local artists, vendors, and entrepreneurs to sell their goods and services, which helps the local economy as well. Green festivals can also stimulate tourism and hospitality industries, which can lead to more investment and infrastructure developments in the hosting destination.

All in all, green festivals are a great opportunity to catalyse positive change and promote sustainability values while providing unforgettable experiences for participants. By combining environmental stewardship with cultural preservation and economic growth, green festivals help to build sustainability and resilience in destination communities. Let us take a closer look at some of the green festivals that have had a positive impact on the local and global scene.

Unique Attributes of Green Festivals

Green festivals differ from traditional festivals in the following ways:

- **Environmental Focus:** At its core, there is a strong focus on reducing environmental impact. This is reflected in processes such as:
 - **Waste Reduction:** Using reusable or biodegradable materials for plates, cups, and utensils, reducing the use of single-use plastics, and implementing composting and recycling programmes are all examples of waste reduction.
 - **Conservation of Natural Resources:** Water conservation measures include using efficient systems to reduce water consumption, teaching guests about water conservation, and using renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power.

CHAPTER 9

Role of Community in the Development of Conducive Destination Bicycle Tourism in Rural Areas

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Abstract: Bicycle tourism is a key solution for environmental conservation and sustainability in rural areas. This chapter examines the role of community in the development of bicycle tourism through the comparative analysis of advanced nations and India. For this study, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted to examine the community involvement towards bicycle tourism development in selected advanced nations and India. The recent developments in bicycle infrastructure, policies, and strategies implemented by selected advanced nations were also reviewed. The SLR highlighted the vital significance of the community's role in bicycle tourism development. As a significant contribution, the chapter provides actionable insights for Indian service providers with practical solutions and strategies. This chapter is a valuable resource for rural communities seeking to enhance their approach towards bicycle tourism development and align it with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Keywords: Bicycle tourism, Community role, SDGs, Service provider, SLR, Sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Bicycle tourism is a form of travel where bicycles are the primary means of transportation between destinations. It is usually utilized by small groups or individuals for sustainability purposes (Bojović *et al.*, 2024). Bicycling is gaining popularity among individuals of all ages and social backgrounds. It represents a gentle form of recreational tourism with numerous favorable outcomes, including its eco-friendliness, encouragement of a healthy lifestyle, and utilization of an economical mode of transportation (Lamisha, 2024).

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Bicycle tourism promotes the sustainability branding of tourist destinations, preserves local cultural values and heritage places, and significantly contributes to the economic growth of rural areas. The development of bicycle tourism has been primarily driven by economically viable projects, which also open up new employment opportunities in destinations that support sustainable bicycle tourism (Gazzola *et al.*, 2018). Environmentally conscious tourists perceive bicycle tourism as a sustainable activity that aids in pollution reduction and environmental preservation (Lee, Chen, and Huang, 2014).

Several factors influence bicycle tourists' visits to a destination, and the absence of suitable routes, adequate equipment, elevation, availability of accommodations, and refreshment facilities are among the most crucial factors for their choices (Pommering *et al.*, 2017). Without these essential elements, most tourists are unlikely to consider destination bicycle tourism (Slavić & Ivek, 2021) as a product. Therefore, educating the public about destination bicycle tourism is of utmost importance in shaping a positive perception of this form of travel and addressing these challenges (Zhou *et al.*, 2022). Destination bicycle tourism is not new in the world; however, awareness is minimal in India. India is the second largest manufacturer of bicycles after China (NITI Aayog, 2020), but bicycle infrastructure development in India is minimal. In cities, developing a bicycle tourism destination as a product is very difficult due to a lack of space, but rural areas are the best options for destination bicycle tourism development (Dhingra and Kodukula, 2010). There is a need for an effective strategy to develop bicycle infrastructure in rural India. Currently, the available research studies on this topic are limited; hence, this study examined the bicycle infrastructure development strategies and community role in advanced nations and India.

METHODOLOGY

To understand the related studies on community involvement in destination bicycle tourism development, infrastructure, policies, and strategies implemented by selected advanced nations, a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using an associated approach, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol (Nyagadza, 2022). The SLR approach is used to select specific questions related to the study in a rigorous and clear way (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2021). SLR provides an in-depth and thorough planning and design strategy for searching data to minimize bias by adequately identifying and condensing all related data in the study (Wilt & Fink, 2007).

PRISMA approach gives a proper flow chart from the steps of the SLR process, such as identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The primary purpose

of this approach is to identify and analyze literature to extract and summarize data from it (Chaudhary *et al.*, 2021), guaranteeing a bibliographic approach (Snyder, 2019). The main agenda of this approach is its analytical, methodological approach, which makes it easy to understand and analyze the data (Kamioka, 2019).

Identification of Literature

In the literature search process, Scopus, Wiley, and Google Scholar databases were utilized for identification purposes. The keywords used for the search were ‘development of conducive bicycle tourism, policy in advanced nations, international bicycle strategies, and international bicycle infrastructure development. Most of the documents selected for the literature review were white papers (policy documents) uploaded by the governments of the chosen nations. These identification methods aid in establishing criteria to obtain data that effectively meet the study's objectives. The inclusive and exclusive criteria of PRISMA are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria of PRISMA.

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed academic journals, book chapters, private and government reports.	Studies that focus solely on general tourism services without specific emphasis on bicycle tourism services.
Literature limited to the years between 2008 and 2023, to capture fundamental and recent trends.	Multiple sources that cover the same research findings or data should be used to avoid redundancy.
Includes various countries and regions to ensure a global perspective.	Exclude studies that do not contribute valuable insights or answer research questions effectively.
Theoretical framework and successful infrastructure implementation, federal framework, service providers' theories, and strategies successfully implemented	Sources that discuss accountability practices in a general business context, unrelated to the bicycle tourism industry
Studies include outcomes and impacts of improved service provider accountability, including benefits for local economies, environmental conservation, and tourist satisfaction.	-
Includes the impact of technology and innovation on accountability in bicycle tourism services, including digital platforms for information-sharing and bike-sharing systems.	-
Includes challenges and barriers service providers face in enhancing accountability and implementing bicycle tourism services.	-

Economic Growth vs. Environmental Sustainability: Analyzing the Impact of Kachchh Rann Utsav on Environmental Issues

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Abstract: The Kachchh Rann Utsav is one of the most important tourist destinations in the world. This study aims to investigate the complex correlation between economic growth and environmental concerns in the context of this event. The primary data has been collected by a two-stage cluster sampling method from 978 respondents. Multiple Regression Analysis is used to analyze the impact of economic variables on social and environmental issues of the people of Kachachh. The five factors: Investment & Skill Development (I&SD), Economic Development (ED), Rural Tourism (RT), Traditional Business (TB), and Economic Leakage (EL), which influence economic impact, have been taken into account in this study to estimate the effect of environmental issues or impact. The findings of this study can provide valuable insights for shaping policies and decision-making processes aimed at fostering sustainable tourism development and environmental preservation in Kchchh and other comparable tourist locations. The study suggests that the emphasis for development by the stakeholders should be on beach development, botanical gardens, greater facilities for wildlife preservation, and secure safaris and expeditions. The government should work on environmental issues, as economic development leads to pollution due to overcrowding, noise, plastic pollution, and wastage.

Keywords: Economic impact, Environmental impact, Investment and skill development, Kachchh rann utsav, Rural tourism.

INTRODUCTION

The Kachchh Rann Utsav is a lively festival that showcases the cultural history of the Kachchh area in Gujarat, India. It has gained considerable recognition as a prominent tourist destination and a catalyst for economic growth. Nevertheless, the swift economic progress linked to the event has generated apprehensions over its influence on the nearby environment. This analytical research seeks to

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thoroughly investigate the complex correlation between economic growth and environmental concerns in the context of the Kachchh Rann Utsav.

With the festival's increasing popularity, it has attracted both local and international tourists, resulting in the expansion of economic activities related to the event. This has led to the construction of infrastructure, greater commercialization, and a rise in human activities in the region. These advancements frequently impose strain on the natural environment, which can result in issues like the deterioration of habitats, the creation of trash, the contamination of water, and the disturbance of local ecosystems.

This research aims to examine the many aspects of this phenomenon, investigating the interaction between economic advancement and environmental sustainability. The objective of this study is to analyze the Kachchh Rann Utsav and its economic activities to identify and understand the precise environmental effects caused by the event. In addition, the study will strive to identify viable methods and practices that may be used to solve these difficulties, with a focus on promoting a balanced approach to economic growth that emphasizes environmental conservation. The study will also explore ways to mitigate the challenges and promote sustainable practices.

This research aims to offer valuable insights into the impact of economic development on environmental issues by analyzing the Kachchh Rann Utsav as a case study. It seeks to provide lessons and recommendations that can inform sustainable development practices in similar cultural and festival contexts worldwide.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review component of the study examines prior research on the influence of economic growth on environmental problems, with a specific emphasis on the case study of Kachchh Rann Utsav. Notable discoveries from the literature review comprise:

1. The economic progress in the Kachchh Rann Utsav has caused a rise in tourist activities and the construction of infrastructure. However, this has also caused negative effects on the environment, including the loss of habitats, pollution, and disturbance of ecosystems.
2. Effective management techniques are required to achieve a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation, with the aim of reducing the adverse effects on the ecosystem. This study seeks to conduct a more in-depth examination of the correlation between economic progress and environmental

concerns within the framework of Kachchh Rann Utsav (Kostruba, 2018). This chapter seeks to enhance the current body of knowledge by performing a case study on the effects of economic growth on environmental concerns in Kachchh Rann Utsav. It intends to provide a thorough examination of the particular difficulties and prospects that emerge in this situation. The results of this study can provide valuable insights for shaping policies and decision-making processes aimed at fostering sustainable economic growth and environmental preservation in Kachchh Rann Utsav and other comparable tourist locations. This study seeks to address a knowledge vacuum in the current literature by analysing the influence of economic growth on environmental concerns, notably focusing on the Kachchh Rann Utsav. The findings of this study can offer a useful understanding of the intricate correlation between economic progress and environmental concerns, aiding stakeholders in making well-informed choices to alleviate adverse effects.

Encourage the adoption of sustainable practices in tourist places such as Kachchh Rann Utsav. The objective of Ardahaey (2011) is to analyze how economic growth affects environmental concerns in Kachchh Rann Utsav. The study specifically focuses on the importance of implementing efficient management techniques that encourage sustainable tourist development and environmental preservation. The research findings suggest that the economic expansion in Kachchh Rann Utsav has caused a rise in tourist activities and the construction of infrastructure. However, this has also contributed to environmental deterioration and disturbances to the ecological balance. This underscores the need to adopt management techniques that give priority to sustainability and tackle the adverse effects of economic development on the environment (Kostruba, 2018). Efficient management solutions are necessary for the sustainable development of tourism, ensuring a harmonious equilibrium between economic expansion and environmental preservation. The policies should prioritize the reduction of adverse effects caused by economic growth on the environment in tourist locations such as Kachchh Rann Utsav. The study recognizes the necessity of implementing efficient management techniques to facilitate the advancement of sustainable tourism and environmental preservation in Kachchh Rann Utsav (Ardahaey, 2011). Tourism exerts a substantial beneficial influence on the economic expansion of both advanced and emerging nations. Nevertheless, tourism is also responsible for heightened energy usage and the release of CO₂, hence exacerbating environmental contamination (Paramati *et al.*, 2017; Khan *et al.*, 2020; Wang & Wang, 2018; Liu *et al.*, 2022). Sustainable tourism practices are essential for mitigating the environmental degradation resulting from the development of tourism (Khan *et al.*, 2020). It is crucial to align tourist policies with broader economic, environmental, and energy policies in order to promote the transition towards sustainable tourism development (Khan *et al.*, 2020). The government's environmental reporting affects tourist development, which is

Art Tourism and Tribal Entrepreneurship Development through Gond Art in Madhya Pradesh: A Case Study of Patangarh Village

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Abstract: Entrepreneurship plays a vital role in accelerating economic growth, generating employment opportunities, reducing poverty, and harnessing natural resources to drive the country's economic advancement. The attributes and skills of entrepreneurs are essential for fostering industrial expansion, eliminating poverty through self-employment, and creating job opportunities for others. Rural development is becoming more connected with entrepreneurship, which is considered a driving economic force that may contribute to sustaining and enhancing life for those in rural areas. Tourism mainly comprises small entrepreneurs and plays an important role in the growth of the tourism sector. Entrepreneurship has grown in significance, particularly in rural areas, since it is considered a primary driving force behind rural tourism. Painting is one of the most delicate works of Art, expressing human ideas and feelings via colours & designs. Indian paintings depict the country's diverse culture and traditions. Gond is a famous tribal art form in Madhya Pradesh. Gond Art is associated with the Gond tribe, which has a variety of distinctive, innovative designs, characteristic patterns, and colour combinations. Initially, the Gond painting was used to decorate the walls of the dwelling. It is one of our heritage gems that emphasizes culture. The present article focuses on the entrepreneurial potential opportunities in the Pantangarh area of the Dindori district, Madhya Pradesh.

Keywords: Art tourism, Entrepreneurship, Gond painting, Self-employment, Small businesses.

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INTRODUCTION

The term Entrepreneur was introduced by the Irish-French economist Richard Cantillon as an idiomatic phrase from French. In English, an entrepreneur is someone who is prepared to aid and begin a new company or enterprise while accepting full responsibility for the outcome (Santos 2022). Tribal peoples are individuals who have historical continuity in certain regions and see themselves as distinct from the people who focus on those territories as a result of colonial influences. Because they are a minority in society, they are now fighting to conserve, develop, and pass on their lands to future generations. This group has its own legal system, social institutions, and cultural trends (Tomar, 2017). Furthermore, according to the Oxford Dictionary, a tribe is defined as “a group of people in a primitive or barbarous stage of development who acknowledge the authority of a chief, and typically view themselves as descended from a single progenitor.” The country's tribal status portrays a complex picture; some locations have a significant tribal concentration, while others have a tiny percentage of the entire population. Some tribal communities are still in the food-collecting stage, while others utilise shifting cultivation, and still others may be practising ancient kinds of agriculture. Scheduled Tribes (STs) are official Indian designations for distinct groups of historically disadvantaged people (Gali *et al.*, 2022). Scheduled tribes account for around 8.28% of the overall population in India, with the majority of them residing in rural regions (Tomar, 2017). Because of these villages' socioeconomic backwardness, a huge number of predatory forces have overtaken them. A great number of studies have been undertaken at both the national and international levels to emphasise the conditions of both lower castes and tribal people. Entrepreneurship is the backbone of economic development in a country like India, and there is a common misperception that entrepreneurship is inherent. This characteristic, however, may be encouraged with adequate guidance. Traits can be cultivated in tribal people *via* adequate training; a great number of problems related to this segment of society may be readily managed (Tripathi, 2014). In recent years, the tourism industry has grown to be one of the most significant economic sectors, playing an essential role in entrepreneurial growth. The notion of entrepreneurship was initially employed in the 17th century (Priya and Khamesra 2019). Tourist entrepreneurship entails using innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness in the tourist industry (Ratten, 2018). The process of finding, starting, and growing a new business endeavour in the tourism sector is referred to as tourism entrepreneurship.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the potential of Gond Art in becoming the key centre for entrepreneurship in Madhya Pradesh's Patangarh district.

- To explore the contribution of Gond Art to Art tourism in Patangarh Village.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as the identification and attainment of business opportunities within the individual–opportunity network (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). According to Baumol (1996), Entrepreneurship can be profitable, fruitless (*e.g.*, rent-seeking), or even catastrophic (*e.g.*, illegal activities). Entrepreneurs are “those who are smart and imaginative in discovering methods to increase their own wealth and resources, power, and status.”

Tribal Entrepreneurship entails the strategic utilisation of indigenous resources, fostering their growth, and seizing opportunities to foster the advancement of indigenous communities, such as tribes or American Indian reservations. This is achieved through the establishment and management of enterprises that are collectively owned by the tribe or through partnerships and collaborations with other businesses. Tribal entrepreneurship encompasses indigenous enterprises spanning various levels, including village, reservation, and regional contexts. Additionally, at the individual and family level, entrepreneurship, often linked with self-employment, is essential to expand employment opportunities (De Bruin & Mataira, 2018).

Rural Tourism

From the early 1990s, peripheral rural areas in several nations have undergone economic restructuring as part of the move from People in foreign to post-Fordist industrial systems. Tourism has been highlighted as having a significant impact in various circumstances (OECD 1995; CEC 1996, 2005; EUROPA 2003; Cawley & Gillmor 2008). This theory is well-founded since postmodern tourists and outdoor recreationists in general are known to be drawn to peripheral coastal and highland settings that may be unfavourable to agriculture, despite the possibility of conflict between these two groups (Page 1994; Hohl & Tisdell 1995; Urry 2002; Hall *et al.* 2003; Crouch & McCabe 2003; Garrod & Wilson 2004). Rural tourism is characterised as the “country experience,” which includes a diverse variety of attractions and activities that take place in rural or agricultural settings. Wide-open landscapes, low levels of tourism development, and possibilities for visitors to directly experience agricultural or natural surroundings are some of its fundamental traits (Alberta, 2010). Rural tourism is defined as any kind of tourism that exhibits rural life, Art, culture, and tradition in rural places, therefore supporting the local community economically and socially and allowing interaction between tourists and locals for a more fulfilling tourism experience

CHAPTER 12

Sustainable Tourism Development through a Comprehensive Approach: Evidence from Natural Attractions of Sunamganj, Bangladesh

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the scope for sustainable tourism development in Sunamganj, Bangladesh, by using its natural resources with local community involvement and introducing appropriate policies. The objective is to understand the subject extensively through a framework that supports eco-friendly tourism in the areas while keeping socio-cultural and economic factors in view. This is a mixed-methods study that combines both qualitative and quantitative data. The primary factual data is obtained through on-the-spot surveys, interviews, and feedback from 60 tourists. The analysis draws on secondary data from extant literature, government reports, and case studies of sustainable tourism. Research results showed that though Sunamganj has natural attractions such as Niladri Lake, Tanguar Haor, Jadukata River, Biki Bil, and Shimul Bagan, due to a lack of infrastructure and policy support, tourism in Sunamganj remains undeveloped. However, there is a vast scope for ecotourism and community activities that could benefit the local population. The chapter focuses on the coverage, especially for Sunamganj, and does not evaluate larger regional effects. Further study should be conducted to determine if similar strategies can be instituted in other districts of Bangladesh. Suggestions range from improving infrastructure, promoting eco-resorts, to implementing community-based tourism and synergic partnerships between the private and public sectors. Policy measures should focus on promoting ecotourism and providing more incentives for sustainable practices. This paper offers a novel approach linking sustainable tourism guides with community development and policy frameworks. It offers insights for policymakers and tourism operators interested in developing ecotourism in uncharted territories such as Sunamganj.

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Keywords: Community engagement, Ecotourism, Natural attractions, Policy support, Sunamganj, Sustainable tourism, Tourism development.

INTRODUCTION

Sunamganj is a district located in the Sylhet Division of Bangladesh and offers several unique and attractive tourism spots like Tanguar Haor, Niladri Lake, Shimul Bagan, and Jadukata River. Limited infrastructure security and awareness, the area needs a lot of development, infrastructure, and focus on conservation before any further tourism can prosper. But as research indicates, places like Sunamganj are yet to be properly explored in Bangladesh (Jahan, 2014). Beautiful natural views with eye-catching water bodies and mesmerizing nature can attract tourists from all over the world to Bangladesh (Bhuiyan, 2018).

As the research says, Tourism is a major force in the economic development of Bangladesh. The natural beauty of the country and its archeological treasures offer unique attractions for tourists worldwide, thus constituting a potential source of revenue for the nation (Talukder, 2021). Yet, due to poor promotion and investment in the importance of the tourism sector, many such sites have decayed.

A perspective on tourism in sunamgonj, bangladesh—highlighting tourism potential for sustainable development Agro-ecological tourism and comprehensive planning can support overall greater local economies and environmental sustainability (Nowreen, 2023). Tanguar Haor holds great potential for a unique sustainable tourism sector that can benefit the environment as well as local communities. Under wise management and with the active participation of local communities, Tanguar Haor can be a model of sustainable tourism in Bangladesh, striking a balance between economic opportunities for the locals and the conservation of the natural heritage of the wetlands (Muneem, 2017).

Things are not up to the mark in terms of sustainable tourism methods and practices in Sunamganj as well. Though ecotourism is gaining global importance, there has been no systematic attempt to implement it in this area. For instance, previous studies showed that sustainable tourism must be promoted to conserve potential natural resources like Niladri Lake and Shimul Bagan from being polluted due to the highest degree of agreement among the respondents on this issue. This will help to draw nature-loving travellers' attention. A type of tourism came into existence that could attract environmentally conscious tourists, which is termed ecotourism.

It reflects a significant shortcoming in the tourism development of Sunamganj, which is to have no proper marketing & promotional activities.

The Bangladesh government has committed to ensuring sustainable tourism practices through comprehensive planning that aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Nowreen, 2023). Effective governmental engagement may establish the essential foundation for promoting growth in this sector, guaranteeing that Sunamganj's natural attractions receive the requisite attention and preservation while offering economic opportunities to local populations.

In short, Sunamganj has a massive scope of tourism, but unfortunately, it has not grown due to a lack of infrastructure development projects, poor engagement with local people, and a lack of promotional activities and strong policy notes. If proper interventions are made and the right track is followed, Sunamganj itself can turn into a strong contributor to the tourism asset of Bangladesh that will not only help to improve the lifestyle of the local people but also be beneficial for the national economy.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The key objective of this research is to explore the magnificent natural beauty of Sunamganj District, also known as the city of moonlight, in addition to proposing some policy and managerial recommendations. Hereby, the specific objectives are:

- i. To evaluate the present tourism infrastructure and services in Sunamganj
- ii. To analyze the distinctive natural attractions for sustainable tourism development through a comprehensive approach in Sunamganj
- iii. To make strategic recommendations for developing sustainable tourism in Sunamganj

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable natural area development necessitates a holistic tactic accounting for ecological, economic, and societal elements. This confirms procurement without exhaustion, advances preservation in delicate habitats, and advantages neighborhood groups while giving instructional adventures for the general population (M. M., 2012). Sustainable utilization of natural attractions demands inclusive planning with environmental protection and cultural heritage as

Empowering Community Entrepreneurs in Rural Tourism through Digital Marketing in Bangladesh

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Abstract: In Bangladesh, people living in rural areas are comparatively less involved in tourism development, and rural tourism hasn't yet flourished. This chapter's primary objective is to examine the significance of Digital Marketing in empowering local/community entrepreneurs in rural tourism in Bangladesh. It is a systematic literature review based on secondary data from previous literature, including case studies. The findings reflect the challenges local/community entrepreneurs face in rural tourism, including inadequate Infrastructure, Lack of Finance, Inadequate Technology Support, Lack of Organized Markets, too many intermediaries, Urban Elites, and Less education and literacy. This is where Digital marketing can fit as a tool to reduce the barriers and create rural entrepreneurs who can play a role in creating a sustainable tourist destination. The key themes are the social divide in empowerment, barriers in community-based rural tourism entrepreneurship, digital marketing to support entrepreneurship in rural tourism, digital marketing to reduce the barriers, and other limitations that hinder rural entrepreneurial initiatives in the tourism sector. In addition, the study explores the potential of digital marketing tools like Social Media marketing, such as Facebook and YouTube, in terms of knowledge, management skills, language development, and reaching and engaging with tourists and tourism stakeholders. This study's findings are limited to Bangladesh's perspective. Therefore, conducting similar studies in different countries provides broader findings. The practical implications offer actionable insights to local entrepreneurs and policymakers by emphasizing the importance of Digital marketing and relevant skill development in Bangladesh to promote local/community entrepreneurship in rural tourism. Existing studies focus mostly on generic tourism instead of focusing precisely on the local/community entrepreneurs in rural tourism. Again, as technology is evolving every day, much of the existing literature does not address the trends of the modern 'Digital Marketing' perspective in rural entrepreneurial tourism. The chapter novelty addresses these gaps and seeks to find ways to mitigate challenges and utilize opportunities through digital marketing for local entrepreneurs in rural tourism, ultimately contributing to rural development and creating sustainable rural tourism in Bangladesh. To further advance the research scope, this chapter provides recommendations to the appropriate stakeholders, including tourism policymakers, NGOs, government organizations, and

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academic scholars, to emphasize research on improving the infrastructure, providing better internet communication, rural network development, and arranging Digital marketing-related training for local entrepreneurs as a priority.

Keywords: Barriers, Bangladesh, Community involvement, Digital Marketing, Empowering, Entrepreneurs, Rural Tourism, Sustainability, Tourism stakeholder, Tourism destination.

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is at the top of the global discussion, especially in tourism. Social sustainability includes bringing all categories of people to the front equally. This is where rural tourism and community entrepreneurship come in. Bangladesh is a developing country where most people in rural areas are comparatively less financially well-off, less educated, and less involved in the development process, which is not different in terms of tourism development. As a result, most tourism development is based on urban areas, and rural tourism hasn't flourished. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (2018), the 2011 census states that the number of villages in Bangladesh is 87,182 (Dhariwal *et al.*, 2024). The report (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2018, p. XXVII) acknowledges the prospect of rural tourism in Bangladesh by stating "*riverine beauty, colorful tribal life and simple village life of the friendly millions are the main motivational factors for potential visitors*" (Nekmahmud & Hassan, 2021). In addition to that, Rustic Bangladesh's serene natural environment creates opportunities for urban people to get rid of hectic parts of life. A variety of activities can be incorporated to enjoy rural tourism. According to the study of Ahmed and Jahan (2013), five categories of tourism can be incorporated: nature-based, heritage, agriculture, cultural, and riverine (Ahmed & Jahan, 2013). However, there is a relationship between rural tourism and poverty alleviation in Bangladesh by specifying 'pro-poor tourism' and 'community-based tourism' as part of rural tourism. Although it is possible to create net positive outcomes through rural tourism for Bangladesh's economic, social, and environmental development, the weakness lies in utilizing resources with planned efforts to provide desired results (Ahmed & Jahan, 2013).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural Tourism

Oppermann (1996) cited the definition of "Rural tourism" as farm and non-far-based tourism in natural areas and communities, but does not include activities in outdoor recreation areas such as national parks, forests, or wilderness areas. Chen

& Akita (2021) stated that farmers and rural communities arrange various activities, services, and amenities to bring tourists extra income. As per the observation of Tane and Thierheimer (2009), some factors like rural environment, rural population, and natural products are vital for rural tourism. These affect the distinctive characteristics of culture, gastronomy, recreation, and ecology to the tourists. Knowd (2001) said Rural tourism is anything that attracts tourists from cities to outside areas. This may include both natural and man-made environments and tourism-based activities. In their research, Pakshir & Nair (2011) stated that rural tourism's socio-economic dimension affects local people's perception of the homestay program in the Bazm Village located in the Bavanat Country of Fars Province of Iran. Aref and Gill (2009) said that rural tourism has an impact on reducing poverty in rural peripheries. They perceived that rural tourism development is impacted by rural cooperatives and community participation. According to Johnson (2010), rural or community-based tourism is a product of local development that utilizes tourism to generate social, economic, and cultural advantages for the local community. In this study, he scrutinized the opportunities created by socio-economic enterprises to develop community-based tourism in rural parts of Canada. (Michael *et al.*, 2013) discussed the importance of community participation in tourism development decisions and justified this as a significant factor in providing benefits to lifestyles, beliefs, values, and respect for communities. Komppula (2014) talked about a different perspective of rural tourism by identifying positive and negative impacts on the local community and stated that it affects these people's lives. He mentioned that rural tourism acts as a factor for development, but also has negative sides. He added that the negative impact can be reduced by involving local entrepreneurs in rural tourism decisions. *Citizen Participation in Decision Making*, 2013, revealed the significance of the environmental, natural, and socio-cultural appeal of villages to attract tourism planners and tourists. They also mentioned that tourism development-related barriers could be reduced by integrating Rural tourism with Rural development plans. Locals' participation in decision-making is important for World Heritage Site (WHS) conservation and tourism development, which is necessary for economic development (Rasoolimanesh, Ringle, *et al.*, 2017). Giampiccoli *et al.* (2015) linked Rural tourism with disadvantaged community people and are linked with empowerment, sustainability, social justice, and self-reliance. Giampiccoli and Saayman (2018) addressed the significance of locals' participation and their relation with Community-Based Tourism (CBT), which is participatory, gradually jeopardized, and marginalized by outsiders and the local elite. Chin *et al.* (2016) mentioned the significance of sustainable management and destination marketing for rural tourism and mentioned community support, which is vital for rural tourism development. In the case of Kenya, researchers mentioned the awareness level of rural tourism and its contributions towards socio-economic and

Promoting Kelantanese Culinary Heritage Through Homestay Programs: A Review

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Abstract: This study explores the potential of Kelantan's traditional food in enhancing homestay programs in Kelantan, Malaysia. It identifies a gap in the current homestay offerings, which have yet to fully leverage their local culinary heritage as a core attraction for both local and international tourists. The homestay programs have not positioned Kelantan's traditional food as a key cultural product, nor have they developed activities that highlight these foods as an integral part of the homestay experience. This research aims to assess how traditional foods can be utilized to promote food tourism through homestay programs. A qualitative content analysis approach, employing a systematic literature review of 60 journals from Scopus, Mendeley, and Science Direct, was used to achieve the study's objective. The analysis identified two main categories: identity and tourism, from which six themes emerged—heritage food, uniqueness, food image, gastronomic tourism, cultural exchange, and homestay activities. The findings underscore the importance of incorporating Kelantan's traditional foods to enhance the tourist experience, providing deeper insights into the culture and history of the region. This study highlights the role of traditional food in promoting Kelantan as a food tourism destination through its homestay programs.

Keywords: Culinary, Food tourism, Homestay programs, Kelantan heritage food, Systematic literature review.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's rich tapestry of cultures, ethnicities, languages, cuisines, lifestyles, and natural resources has made it a unique and highly sought-after destination for global travelers (Shukor *et al.*, 2014). The homestay program in Malaysia is a government initiative designed to attract tourists by offering a unique cultural experience, distinct from traditional hotels or resorts. Through this program, tourists live with local families, allowing them to immerse themselves in the

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culture and lifestyle of the region. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) emphasizes that these programs provide more than just accommodation; they focus on lifestyle and cultural experiences, promoting deeper connections between visitors and the local community (Abdullah & Rahman, 2022).

Over the years, the number of homestay operators has increased, particularly in areas frequented by tourists from Japan, Europe, Australia, and the U.S., who are drawn to Malaysia's rich variety of traditional foods that vary significantly by region (Malaysia Truly Asia, 2024). Kelantan is especially known for its vibrant and slightly sweet traditional dishes, such as *Nasi Kerabu* and *Nasi Tumpang*, which shape the state's culinary identity (Umami Around Malaysia Blog, 2024). Despite the variety of activities offered in Malaysia's homestay programs, traditional food is often under-promoted as a central tourism product. Many homestays tend to emphasize recreational and economic activities rather than showcasing local cuisine. This oversight may stem from the higher costs associated with sourcing ingredients necessary for preparing traditional meals. However, traditional food has significant potential to enhance homestay programs as food tourism destinations, particularly in Kelantan.

This study aims to explore how traditional Kelantanese food can enhance the tourist experience and promote food tourism within the homestay context. The objective of this study is to understand how traditional foods contribute to promoting homestay programs as food tourism destinations. Specifically, it seeks to examine the role of traditional Kelantanese dishes in attracting tourists and enhancing their overall experience. The findings of this study are significant for several groups. For tourists, it will enhance awareness of Kelantan's traditional foods, potentially increasing interest in food tourism. For local communities, it encourages knowledge exchange between tourists and homestay owners, particularly regarding food preparation techniques, thereby strengthening community bonds. For the homestay programs themselves, insights from this study can help them function more effectively as tools for tourism and contribute positively to the local economy. From a broader perspective, promoting food tourism in Kelantan could stimulate the state's economic growth. Finally, this study will enrich academic literature by summarizing existing research on Kelantan's traditional foods and their role in promoting homestay tourism, providing a foundation for future studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Homestay Program in Malaysia, initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC) in 1995 in Temerloh, Pahang, aims to enhance rural

community participation in the tourism sector. The program has since evolved into a key product that promotes Malaysia to tourists while fostering greater local community involvement (Pusiran & Xiao, 2013). In Malaysia, the term “homestay” refers to lodging services where tourists stay in homes with facilities such as private bathrooms, providing a comfortable and immersive experience with the homeowners (Shukor *et al.*, 2014). As a form of community-based tourism, the program offers tourists the chance to experience rural life and the unique lifestyle of Malaysia’s local communities (Kayat *et al.*, 2016).

Many modern tourists choose homestays for the opportunity to observe traditional ways of life and enjoy the area's breathtaking natural beauty (Kamaluddin *et al.*, 2022). As a relatively new tourism product, homestays contribute to rural economies through activities designed to attract tourists (Ramli *et al.*, 2020). Homestay operators must adhere to MOTAC’s criteria, which include easy access to roads, sufficient facilities (such as separate bathrooms and bedrooms), no criminal record, freedom from contagious diseases, and a high standard of hygiene (Mohd Salleh *et al.*, 2014). What sets the Malaysian homestay program apart from others globally is the unique opportunity for tourists to stay with host families, gaining insight into local traditions and lifestyle through firsthand experience (Kasuma *et al.*, 2016).

The issue of tourism accommodation can be addressed through the implementation of homestay programs, which actively engage local communities (Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2014). These programs allow tourists to experience the traditional lifestyle of Malay farmers and fishermen, particularly in Kelantan, where the homestay experience serves as a key tourism selling point (Atlas *et al.*, 2015). Kelantan is one of the states in Malaysia. The homestay program includes 152 owners across eight villages, offering a total of 182 rooms for tourists seeking an authentic stay (Bachok *et al.*, 2019). These villages—Pantai Suri, Seterpa, Kemunchup, Bukit Jering, Batu Papan, Kubang Telaga, Renok Baru, and Jelawang—focus on showcasing local culture and activities (Bhuiyan, 2019). Eight of these villages have registered homestays under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC), and are known for their natural attractions, which draw tourists interested in exploring the local environment (Bhuiyan *et al.*, 2014). According to one study, the distribution of homestay ownership across these villages is as follows: Kg. Pantai Suri, Tumpat (20 owners), Renok Baru, Gua Musang (20 owners), Bukit Jering, Jeli (20 owners), Kg. Kubang Telaga, Bachok (32 owners), Kg. Batu Papan, Gua Musang (12 owners), Seterpa, Kota Bharu (29 owners), Kg. Jelawang, Dabong (9 owners), and Kemunchup, Machang (10 owners) (Bachok *et al.*, 2018).

Serving the Countryside through Green Marketing Tools: Role of Environmental Advertising, Eco-Labels and Eco-Brands

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Abstract: In order to ensure that the tourism industry contributes to environmental sustainability, particularly in rural areas, this study aims to investigate the connection between green marketing strategies (such as environmental advertising, eco-labels, and eco-brands) and the environmentally conscious purchasing habits of tourists visiting these areas. The data was collected from Raipur, and SPSS was used for the data analysis. EFA and CFA were used to identify and validate the factors (green marketing tools) which influence tourists' purchase behaviour; In a quest to uncover the intricate relationship between environmental tools and the purchasing habits of tourists, further SEM was put to work. The results shine a light on the undeniable impact of the three-dimensional construct of green marketing tools on the choices made by travellers. The discussion delves into the findings, exploring their theoretical and managerial implications, while also acknowledging limitations and paving the way for future research avenues.

Keywords: Eco-Brands, Eco-Labels, Environmental advertising, Green marketing tools, Purchase behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

The global service industry is expected to experience increased expansion in the 21st century, according to the trends that are now in place. Over the last several decades, tourism, which is one of the most important service sectors in the world, has made a substantial contribution to the economy of the whole globe (Law *et al.*, 2011). For the majority of nations, the tourist sector is a vital source of income (Ramjit, 2015). In the heart of the countryside, more and more people are jumping on the bandwagon of rural tourism as a fresh and exciting way to earn a living, especially with traditional farming facing tough times (Hoang, 2015). The significant expansion of the tourist sector has resulted in several adverse effects, particularly on the non-renewable environment. One of these repercussions is the degradation and destruction of natural and environmental resources, which is a contributing factor in the manifestation of climate change (Chekima *et al.*, 2016; Handriana and Ambara, 2016). The booming tourism industry has opened the eyes of stakeholders everywhere, driving home the importance of sustainable tourism development. It's all about striking that perfect balance, ensuring we meet today's needs while keeping an eye on the future for generations to come (Joshi & Rahman, 2015). The three pillars of sustainability—economic, socio-cultural, and environmental are interdependent and contribute to a more promising future for travel and adventure (Chand and Vivek, 2012). However, there is also the argument that sustainability ought to take precedence over financial gains (Jamrozy, 2007). Several green marketing strategies have been implemented to ensure the long-term viability of our valuable environmental tourist assets, which is essential for fully realizing the enormous potential of green marketing in the thriving tourism industry. This includes the dedicated efforts of hoteliers, manufacturers, and the growing number of consumers who are making the conscious choice to embrace green purchasing behaviour (Punitha & Rasdi, 2013; Teng *et al.*, 2012; Veleva & Ellenbecker, 2001). Both rural tourism and green tourism share a common goal: to foster a thriving tourism industry that embraces the ideals of environmental and ecological sustainability. It is all about creating a harmonious balance between enjoying nature and preserving it for future generations. Indeed, it has been shown that green marketing tools serve as powerful strategies to enhance eco-friendly buying habits. It is well-known in the marketing industry that green marketing strategies, including eco-labels, eco-brands, and environmental ads, are quite effective in getting people to buy products that are better for the environment (Furqan *et al.*, 2010). However, it is evident that green marketing tools received very little attention in the academic literature as far as rural destinations are concerned. Thus, this paper will identify various green marketing tools and examine their relationship with respect to green purchase behaviour in rural tourism.

Rural Tourism and Green Marketing Tools

Researchers around the world have proposed various definitions of rural tourism. In this study, a pertinent definition is provided by Thierheimer (2009), who describes rural tourism as being practical in rural areas, manifested by the stated tourism types, whose activities are taking place in rural hotels or motels, classic pensions from rural areas, recreation locations, camping and other touristic structures, all of them situated in rural villages or other rural places (Polonsky, 1999). Green marketing is described as a comprehensive strategy that focuses on understanding, recognising, and meeting the demands of consumers while minimising harm to the environment. This approach aims to make the best use of natural resources for the greater good of both society and organisations. Previous research has underscored the crucial impact of three-dimensional green marketing tools in shaping consumer decisions towards eco-friendly purchases (Delafrooz *et al.*, 2014). An eco-brand is a shining beacon of sustainability, a name, symbol, or design that embodies the spirit of being environmentally friendly and harmless to our precious planet. The unique qualities of eco-brands truly set them apart from the sea of non-green products, making it easy for consumers to spot the difference and choose wisely for a brighter, greener future (Rahbar & Wahid, 2011). Eco-labelling has been embraced by a multitude of organisations, including governments, private companies, and communities, all coming together in a noble quest to safeguard our precious environment. The product described an eco-label as a shining badge that reflects the overall environmental performance of a product (Giridhar, 1998). On the other hand, “green advertising” is any ad that talks about how a product or service is related to nature in some way (Banerjee *et al.*, 1995). It encourages a green lifestyle, whether or not it emphasises a specific product or service, or showcases a company’s commitment to environmental responsibility. The remarkable rise of green advertising in the past twenty years has truly opened the eyes of the public to ecological concerns, resulting in a soaring demand for eco-friendly products (Carlson *et al.*, 1996).

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Consumer Green Purchase Behaviour

The propensity to choose environmentally friendly items over more traditional ones is known as “green purchase intention”(Rashid, 2007). The Theory of Planned Behaviour has improved the model for forecasting the intention to buy environmentally friendly products, as shown by Jebarajakirthy and Lobo (2014). Attitude, knowledge, and value are some of the variables that have been the

Impact of Rural Tourism and Ecotourism on the Economic Development of Local Communities

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Abstract: Tourism is the fastest-growing industry and plays an important role in the economic development of a country. There are different alternative forms of tourism, such as adventure tourism, ecotourism, sustainable tourism, rural tourism, *etc.* Among them, rural tourism and ecotourism are the most important forms of tourism and play a prominent role in rural development, agricultural development, and conservation of natural heritage. This chapter will explore the impact of rural tourism and ecotourism on the economic development of local communities and how both forms help to create employment opportunities for local people and the comprehensive development of local communities. Rural Tourism and Ecotourism offer an alternative source of livelihood for rural people and engage them as active stakeholders in the tourism process. This chapter will highlight understanding how these forms can notably impact the economic development of local communities and create job opportunities, and generate income by selling local crafts such as traditional handlooms, pottery, bamboo crafts, *etc.*, and training local people to establish their own business and promote sustainable development. By investigating case studies and previous literature, the chapter will focus on how these forms of tourism promote entrepreneurship development.

Keywords: Economic development, Ecotourism, Employment opportunities, Local communities, Rural tourism, Sustainable development.

INTRODUCTION

The Tourism Industry is considered a major engine for economic development worldwide. Tourism has significant potential as it can create employment opportunities, economic growth, entrepreneurship development, revenue generation, and foreign exchange earnings. Strategic tourism development helps to meet the needs of tourists and host areas, protecting cultural heritage and the well-being of local people.

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Although various factors, such as agriculture, animal husbandry, dairy, fisheries, handicrafts, and textiles, are the principal contributors to the rural economy, emerging rural tourism and ecotourism activities in rural areas play a pivotal role in the economic growth of local communities.

Rural Tourism is 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 (UNWTO, n.d.).

Ecotourism is responsible tourism to natural areas to understand the cultural and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem while producing economic empowerment that builds the preservation of biodiversity and environmental resources and generates revenue profitable to the local communities.

Rural Tourism may be enriched by conducting events and programs in the villages so as to promote tourism and to strengthen the society, culture, and traditions. When such chances are presented before the tourists in a natural environment, interaction with the locals becomes more convenient, and their perception of the culture is far more authentic (Sreenivasan & Dixit, 2011). Such experience-oriented campaigns leave an everlasting memory, and later at times function as a marketing promotional tool. While promoting tourism in the rural areas, a study on the estimation of the role of local people, supply of amenities, environmental protection, proper application of strategy, and negative and positive impacts of the project must also be made (Trivedi & Dixit, 2005). A bright future for the villagers can be promised by developing tourism in the areas where poverty and illiteracy are high. The traditional rural economy is based on agriculture, forestry, crafts, and other sectors (Jha, 2021). As a result, rural tourism plays a critical role in rural development, as evidenced by the diversification of economic activities and revenue in rural areas (Jha, 2021).

Ecotourism plays a key role in encouraging sustainable practices that benefit the environment, local communities, and the global tourism industry. It provides a win-win situation by offering both environmental preservation and local community development, and educating tourists about the natural environment and culture of local areas.

All-inclusively, rural tourism and ecotourism play a prominent role in the economic development of rural tourist destinations. Both forms offer an alternative source of livelihood for rural people and engage them as active stakeholders in the tourism process. The valuable influence of these forms refers to state revenue by tourist spending in particular destinations, creates job opportunities, generates income by selling local crafts such as traditional

handlooms, pottery, bamboo crafts, *etc.*, and trains local people to become entrepreneurs.

MAJOR ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism can have an important economic impact on local communities, as indicated below:

Increasing Employment Opportunities

Employment opportunities are one of the major direct economic impacts of rural tourism. The problems of unemployment are more severe in developing countries. The tourism industry in rural areas provides a valuable source of employment. Rural tourism engages a vast number of rural people and provides enormous job opportunities that extend from unskilled to semiskilled and to highly specialized. Rural tourism offers employment opportunities for local people in various sectors such as farming, hospitality, guiding, and handicrafts. How it generates various employment opportunities is mentioned below:

- **Guiding:** Local tourist guides who guide tourists on walks, trekking, hiking, and sightseeing tours may not require higher education, but they have to know about the local place, its history, geography, culture, language, *etc.*
- **Hospitality jobs:** Although hospitality jobs in rural areas may not require much qualification compared to highly specialized jobs. But employees have to know how to interact with guests, how to handle situations, *etc.* These jobs require practical skills, emotional quotient, enthusiasm, and dedication.
- **Farm workers:** Farm workers often play an important role in rural tourism. Agrotourism and farm-based tourism are the main attractions for some rural areas. In those areas, farmers directly interact with tourists who visit agricultural fields and describe the various traditional techniques of farming, indigenous agricultural practices, fruit-picking experience, and animal feeding.
- **Artisans:** Artisans produce traditional handicrafts such as bamboo crafts, wooden crafts, handlooms, pottery, paintings, *etc.*, and generate income by selling their products to tourists.
- **Managerial jobs:** Managerial Jobs require high qualifications and specialized skills in business management, hospitality management, tourism management, and customer service. Managers work in different organizations such as hotels, restaurants, tour companies, eco-lodges, and guest houses in rural areas.

Improving Local Economy

Rural Tourism has noteworthy potential to enhance local economies by using distinctive natural, cultural, and agricultural assets of rural regions. So, through

Rural Responsible Tourism: A Catalyst for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: This chapter examines rural responsible tourism through a detailed analysis of case studies from various regions, focusing on the intersection of sustainability, community involvement, and rural development. Using the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework and Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) as theoretical lenses, the study explores how tourism initiatives in rural areas can generate positive economic, social, and environmental outcomes. Key case studies include Kumbalangi Village in Kerala, India, where community-driven tourism has preserved local traditions while creating employment; Phu Loc, Vietnam, which highlights poverty alleviation through eco-friendly tourism; and Mawlynnong Village in Meghalaya, India, showcasing cleanliness and ecological preservation as integral components of sustainable tourism. Drawing on literature from Mowforth and Munt's *Tourism and Sustainability* and journal articles from the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, the chapter presents a comparative analysis of tourism practices that balance economic growth with ecological preservation. The cases also reference reports from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and World Bank, emphasizing the role of responsible tourism in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in rural areas. In addition, the study underscores the importance of local stakeholder engagement, as seen in the Ziro Valley case, where the Apatani tribe's cultural preservation is linked with tourism development. By employing Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) Model, the chapter explains the long-term sustainability of these destinations and the risks associated with over-commercialization. The findings indicate that rural responsible tourism, when managed inclusively and sustainably, can serve as a transformative tool for economic empowerment and environmental conservation in developing regions.

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Keywords: Community-based tourism, Cultural preservation, Economic empowerment, Ecotourism, Environmental conservation, Kumbalangi village, Mawlynnong village, Phu loc, Rural responsible tourism, Sustainable development, Sustainable livelihoods approach (SLA), Sustainable tourism development, Tourism area life cycle (TALC), Triple bottom line (TBL), Ziro valley.

INTRODUCTION

Rural responsible tourism offers a revolutionary approach to integrating sustainability into rural development by harmonising economic growth, environmental preservation, and social equity. While tourism is recognised as a driver of economic growth, its impact on rural areas often leads to challenges such as resource depletion, environmental degradation, and the deterioration of cultural heritage. These problems are intensified by socio-economic disparities and inadequate community involvement in tourism initiatives. This underscores the essential need for tourism policies that enable local communities while safeguarding their natural and cultural assets (Singh *et al.*, 2020). The study is undertaken because rural tourism may advance Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as poverty reduction (SDG-1), economic development (SDG-8), and climate action (SDG-13). Notable examples like Kumbalangi Village in Kerala and Mawlynnong Village in Meghalaya demonstrate the advantageous economic and environmental outcomes of community-driven tourism, highlighting its capacity to generate employment, bolster cultural pride, and preserve natural resources (Sharma and Sarmah, 2021). Despite these accomplishments, gaps remain in understanding how frameworks like the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) may be effectively tailored to diverse rural contexts.

This paper analyses the alignment of rural responsible tourism with these frameworks through case studies that investigate its practical implementation. Kumbalangi Village exhibits the application of TBL principles by prioritising job creation, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation (Mathew and Sreejesh, 2017). Phu Loc in Vietnam exemplifies the efficacy of SLA in cultivating human, environmental, and financial capital for sustainable tourism development (Nguyen and Dang, 2015).

The chapter is organised based on the subsequent objectives:

- a. Address the challenges faced by rural tourism sectors, such as economic instability and environmental concerns, and evaluate sustainable tourism methods.

- b. Study frameworks such as TBL and SLA that promote equitable and inclusive rural development.
- c. Review global case studies to identify effective strategies for sustainable rural tourism.
- d. Propose recommendations for establishing tourism frameworks that empower local populations and protect ecosystems.

This study provides pragmatic insights for leveraging rural tourism to advance sustainable development, linking community empowerment with environmental preservation. The chapter assesses the challenges of over-commercialization through models such as Butler's Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) and highlights strategies for achieving long-term sustainability (Berry, 2000).

Frameworks and Approaches to Rural Responsible Tourism

Rural responsible tourism integrates sustainability principles into rural development, emphasizing the balance between economic, social, and environmental benefits.

Triple Bottom Line Framework (TBL): underscores the importance of simultaneously achieving economic viability, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Fig. (1) illustrates the interrelationship among the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of rural tourism. This involves:

- **Economic Viability:** Ensuring that tourism generates sufficient income for local communities without compromising long-term resource availability (Elkington, 1998).
- **Social Equity:** Promoting community involvement and equitable distribution of benefits (Goodwin, 2011).
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Minimizing negative impacts on natural ecosystems and preserving biodiversity (Lane and Kastenholz, 2015).

CHAPTER 18

Impact Assessment of Agri-Tourism Initiatives on Local Community: Insights from an Indian state

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Abstract: This study investigates the multifaceted impacts of Sula Wines' Agri-tourism initiatives in Nashik, Maharashtra, India. The primary objectives are to analyse the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental effects of Sula Wines' endeavours on the local community. Nashik in India, renowned for its vineyards and wine production, serves as the study area, offering insights into the dynamics of Agri-tourism in a rural setting. The methodology employed in this research involves collecting primary data from residents to provide a comprehensive understanding of the community's perceptions and experiences regarding Sula Wines' Agri-tourism initiatives. Descriptive analysis techniques are utilised to explore and interpret the gathered data, providing valuable insights into the various impacts of Sula Wines' activities.

The study's outcomes reveal a range of positive impacts stemming from Sula Wines' Agri-tourism initiatives on the local community. Economically, the initiatives contribute to income generation, employment opportunities, and economic diversification, thereby enhancing the livelihoods of residents. Socio-culturally, they foster community engagement, cultural exchange, and the preservation of local heritage, enriching the social fabric of the region. Furthermore, environmentally, the initiatives promote sustainable practices, conservation efforts, and environmental awareness, contributing to the preservation of natural resources and ecosystems.

Keywords: Sula wines, Agri-tourism, Wine tourism, Nashik.

INTRODUCTION

Agri-tourism provides opportunities for the visitors to experience the rural world and agricultural practices directly, and to appreciate the local landscape, witness products, services, and local customs (Contini *et al.*, 2009). Small farmers have a very weak position in the agriculture market, and Agri-tourism may provide them with an opportunity to diversify their products by bringing more offerings through tourism (Pitrova *et al.*, 2020). Two factors have led to the demand for Agri-tourism activities, namely the desire to seek supplemental income through diversi-

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fication by farmers towards tourism and increased demand for niche tourism activities, including Agri-tourism, due to increased discretionary income (Che, 2007). Other factors that have led to the growth of Agri-tourism are the extra income through tourism, which can be generated every day instead of seasonally, as in the case of agriculture, and also due to the natural and peaceful environment that is provided to the tourists (Krishna *et al.*, 2021). The elements in Agri-tourism may be related to the agricultural activities for tourism at an agricultural setting, knowing the working operations there and provision of entertainment, education, or leisure (Gao *et al.*, 2014).

Agriculture events celebrate the products, traditions, and way of life of the wine and rural industries. These gatherings often bring together regional artists, winemakers, ranchers, and the community, allowing people to experience food, drink, entertainment, and educational activities. For decades, the concept of wine tourism has been associated with “old-world” wine countries such as France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Germany, and the “New World” wine countries such as the USA, South Africa, and Australia. The rising popularity of wine tourism parallels the growth of rural tourism, which has continuously evolved in Europe and North America (Gartner, 2004; Quadri-Felitti & Fiore, 2012). Academicians' interest in this topic has grown as a result of the expanding interest demonstrated by wine tourists, which has driven the rise of wine events and the wine tourism industry. (Montella, 2017).

Wine is a drink made from fermenting grape juice. He further mentioned, citing old Indian literature, that ancient Indians knew how to make wine in various forms. These drinks also had medicinal formulations that contain alcohol generated by natural fermentation and soluble substances, mainly herbs (Kansara, 2019). Previous studies on wine tourism aimed to critically explore multiple aspects of an area and bring to the forefront various sociological or educational variables. Singh *et al.* (2020) indicate that wineries should align their tourism offerings with nature protection demands to increase repeat visits and prevent economic and social downsides.

This study aims to evaluate the impacts of Sula Wine's agritourism initiatives on the locality and local community. Through an analysis of Agri-tourism's diverse aspects, including its effects on the economy, society, and environment, this research seeks to offer a thorough comprehension of how Agri-tourism efforts impact the nearby community. Kumar (2021) explained in their research, “The analysis of socio-economic benefits from Indian wineries for people living in the areas of winery benefited from these wineries both at social as well as economic levels.” Sula Wines and other Agri-tourism stakeholders can utilise this study's findings to assess the success of their programs and make well-informed changes

that will improve favourable outcomes for the neighbourhood. The study's specific objectives are to determine the direct and indirect economic advantages of agritourism activities, investigate the social transformations and community growth brought about by these activities, and assess the effects of agritourism on the local ecosystem in terms of the environment.

AGRI AND WINE TOURISM

A global phenomenon, agricultural tourism provides an opportunity for city people to get away from the concrete jungle and rediscover their rural roots. A relatively new tourist niche is agricultural tourism. An improved and secure future is being created with many different kinds of diverse activities combined with scientific farming methods (Chatterjee & Prasad, 2019). Agritourism can benefit farmers by providing additional income, fostering collaboration between local and regional networks, promoting sustainable agricultural methods, and providing educational opportunities for visitors. Agri-tourism provides another opportunity for farmers to benefit beyond the limited farming season. Under Agri-tourism, visitors may enjoy various agricultural activities, rural sports, and rural cuisines.

The importance of wine tourism lies in supporting local communities and the potential for wine tourism to contribute to the prosperity of the local community. With reduced profitability in winemaking, tourism will become increasingly important as a way to improve financial sustainability, but with tourism comes development pressures and increased focus on environmental issues by tourists (Wine Makers Federation of Australia, 2007).

SOME COMMON FEATURES OF WINE AND AGRICULTURAL TOURISM

Wine Testing: Wine Testing might be combined with knowledge of winemaking systems, grape assortments, and food pairings. Wine testing and festivals include local rural food, experience rurality, and experience wine-centric activities.

Live Entertainment: At wine and agricultural festivals, live music, dance, and other types of entertainment are frequently featured. Wine festivals are an integral part of the wine tourism experience that represent a unique synergy between wine, special events, and leisure travel (Yuan *et al.*, 2005).

Educational workshops: Learning was an important wine tourism inducement for visitors with higher levels of sensation seeking (Galloway *et al.*, 2008). Wine making, processing, and other sustainable practices are considered key elements in educational workshops at wineries, which may also be entertaining to the visitors.

CHAPTER 19

Sustainable Development Through Community-Based Rural Tourism: A Case Study of the Konkan Region of Maharashtra

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Abstract: The present chapter explores the interplay between sustainable development goals (SDGs) and community-based rural tourism in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. The study highlights various examples and types of community-based rural tourism in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. Performance of the Konkan region of Maharashtra in Sustainable Development Goals Index during the period 2015-16 to 2022-23 is analyzed in this chapter. The challenges and opportunities in attaining sustainable development goals through community-based rural tourism in the Konkan region of Maharashtra are discussed in the present chapter. Ultimately, the findings underscore the potential of community-based rural tourism as a catalyst for achieving SDGs, enhancing both community resilience and ecological sustainability in the Konkan region.

Keywords: Community-based tourism, India, Konkan, Maharashtra, Sustainable Development Goals.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the vision of “Viksit Bharat” has gained momentum as a transformative movement aimed at propelling India toward sustainable development and holistic growth. Central to this vision is the burgeoning potential of tourism in India, which not only showcases the country’s rich cultural heritage

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and diverse landscapes but also serves as a catalyst for economic progress and environmental stewardship. As one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors globally, tourism in India presents a unique opportunity to leverage natural and cultural assets while promoting sustainability. By embracing responsible tourism practices, India can enhance its attractiveness as a travel destination while ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend to local communities and ecosystems. Sustainable development, which balances economic growth with environmental preservation and social equity, is crucial in this context. Consequently, aligning the objectives of Viksit Bharat with sustainable tourism practices can foster a resilient economy, preserve India's ecological and cultural wealth, and ultimately contribute to the well-being of future generations. In this introduction, we will explore the interconnectedness of Viksit Bharat, tourism's potential for sustainable development in India, and the myriad benefits that arise from a conscientious approach to tourism that honors the environment, society, and the economy alike (Harale and Pawar, 2024). The tourism sector in India has witnessed remarkable growth and transformation in recent years, driven by a combination of emerging trends and changing traveler preferences. Recent trends in tourism in India reflect a shift towards experiential travel, with tourists increasingly seeking authentic cultural experiences and off-the-beaten-path destinations. The rise of eco-tourism and sustainable travel initiatives underscores a growing awareness of environmental conservation among travelers. Additionally, the increasing use of technology, such as smart travel apps and digital payment systems, has made travel planning and experiences more accessible and streamlined (Harale *et al.*, 2024). Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a renewed focus on health and safety protocols, shaping the way tourism operates in the country. As India continues to position itself as a diverse and vibrant travel destination, these recent trends are reshaping the landscape of tourism, providing opportunities for growth and innovation across the sector (Harale, 2022b).

The Konkan region of Maharashtra state is one of the tourist attractions in India. The Konkan region is a socially and culturally vibrant region. Central to the sustainable growth of this tourism industry is community involvement, as local residents play a crucial role in preserving traditions, promoting eco-friendly practices, and offering authentic experiences. This collaborative approach not only enhances tourist experiences but also fosters economic development and cultural pride within the Konkan communities. Providing training to the local communities and creating awareness among them about sustainable development goals is a prerequisite for fostering the growth of the tourism sector (Bhave *et al.*, 2022). This can be achieved with the help of grassroots-level NGOs and government bodies. Krishi Vigyan Kendras are the public sector agricultural extension agencies working for the structural transformation of the rural sector in India (Pawar, 2023). Krishi Vigyan Kendra disseminates training to the farmers

related to eco-tourism. Several studies have found that the income level and living conditions of farmers and rural communities in some parts of India have improved due to interventions of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (Wavare *et al.*, 2024). These agricultural farm science centres, commonly known as KVKs are also help farmers in improving scientific knowledge and environmental consciousness (Pawar *et al.*, 2022). However, the intensity of public sector expenditure on agricultural research and extension in India is insufficient (Wavare & Pawar, 2022).

CONCEPT AND ORIGIN OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The term Sustainable Development has gained crucial importance nowadays as global society struggles with the problems of climate change, resource scarcity, and socio-economic inequality. Sustainable development is a solution for balancing economic growth, protecting the environment and climate, and attaining social equity. According to the United Nations report, Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1991). The concept delivers a wide canvas of social, economic, and environmental objectives, which further provide an integrated approach to the development process. The sustainable development concept has three important dimensions: Economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability. The key dimensions of sustainable development are interconnected and cannot be separated from each other. Economic sustainability provides the guiding framework to attain inclusive and equitable economic growth. According to this dimension, the benefits derived from the economic activities should be shared across all sectors of society in such a way that it will not lead to the overconsumption and depletion of natural resources. The second dimension of sustainable development focuses on achieving social equity, cultural diversity, and community well-being. Free access to basic services, education, and equal opportunities for all ensures personal growth and development. This is a prerequisite for building an economically vibrant and environmentally conscious nation. The third dimension of sustainable development involves framing policies and actions that lead to the responsible management of natural resources, mitigation of environmental degradation, as well as preservation and conservation of ecosystems (United Nations, 2024). The three dimensions of sustainable development can be illustrated by Fig. (1) as follows.

Though the term ‘Sustainable development’ gained importance in the late 20th century, the origin and roots of it can be traced back to various climate change and environment-related movements. Henry David Thoreau and John Muir raised concerns about environmental degradation during the Industrial Revolution in the

CHAPTER 20

The Role of Tour Guides in Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development and Responsible Practices in Rural Areas

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Abstract: Tourism is a multifaceted industry and requires the cooperation of various actors. In order to achieve a successful tourism performance in destinations, each actor should fulfill their roles and responsibilities in the best way possible. Tour guides are also a bridge and intermediary in the tourism system. They operate across all sectors of the tourism industry and engage with nearly all stakeholders, maintaining direct contact with both visitors and those they are visiting. Therefore, tourist guides, who are among the most prominent and key actors in the tourism industry, have important duties. One of these is the contribution of tour guides to sustainability. Tour guides significantly influence sustainable tourism development by serving as leaders, mediators, resource managers, and promoters of economic prosperity. They contribute to achieving sustainable development objectives through active management of the tourist experience, conservation of tourism resources, and promotion of the local economy. From this point of view, the book chapter aims to contribute to understanding the impact and importance of tour guides in sustainable tourism development in rural areas.

Keywords: Responsible practices, Rural areas, Sustainable development, Sustainable tourism, Tour guides.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is acknowledged as a pivotal industrial sector for generating wealth, employment, and socio-cultural advantages in numerous developing and developed economies. The alternative tourism movement that emerged in the 1990s paved the way for the popularity of sustainable tourism in rural regions. It is a must to state that this type of tourism (sustainable tourism) differs from conventional tourism and various nature-based tourism models, which primarily focus on enjoyment derived from the natural environment; instead, it emphasizes

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intentional travel (Kong, 2014). Rural tourism has demonstrated a significant rise recently, particularly following the pandemic, as domestic destinations, frequently situated in rural locales, have become the initial choice for many travelers, resulting in an unprecedented increase in tourist numbers (UNWTO, 2023).

Rural tourism often relies on the unique characteristics of the countryside, such as small-scale businesses, open landscapes, engagement with nature, cultural heritage, and traditional communities and practices (Lane, 1994). Rural tourism supply chains seek to contribute to sustainable development objectives by fostering economic growth, addressing poverty and inequality, conserving natural and cultural heritage, and supporting sustainable practices in rural regions (Shah, Bhatt and Kumar, 2024). It seeks to encourage responsible travel, foster awareness of the natural world, and enhance the well-being of local communities (Kong, 2014). Currently, tranquil rural areas characterized by serene ecological and cultural environments attract individuals. However, the increase in tourist numbers is placing greater pressure on the ecological environment of rural tourism areas, which serve as the primary tourism resource. Inappropriate tourist behavior can result in the deterioration of water, vegetation, soil, and other natural resources, obstructing the sustainable growth of rural tourism areas (Yin, Zhang, and Chang, 2021). In the business side of the tourist industry, tour operations are very important for planning and organizing people's trips. The function of tour guides is very significant in this field. Tour guides, with specialized expertise, function in unique environments and have distinct access opportunities. They function as tourists, advisers, facilitators, and supervisors of tourism activities in places focused on sustainable development (Dung, 2024). They facilitate direct communication between the visitor and the visited, addressing the needs of nearly all stakeholders across diverse sectors of the tourism industry (Hu, 2007).

Tour guides play a crucial role in shaping the way tourists behave at destinations (Francis, Wandaka, Wamathai and Jilo, 2019), alongside are vital to sustainable tourism development, acting as resource managers, leaders, mediators, and proponents of economic growth (Pu, Cheng, Samarathunga and Wall, 2023). Managing the tourist experience aids in achieving sustainable development objectives by promoting the preservation of tourism assets and enhancing the regional economy. Therefore, we can argue that tour guides' education and interpretation significantly contribute to the development of responsible travelers (Kong, 2014). Studies on the qualifications of tour guides concerning sustainability, their functions, and sustainable education are still few, although there has been an increase in overall studies in this field (Walker and Weiler, 2017; Alazaizeh, Jamaliah, Mgonja and Ababneh, 2019; Güzel, Nacak, Bilgi and Kalun, 2021). This chapter seeks to elucidate the significance and influence of tour guides on the sustainable tourism growth of rural regions.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Development of Sustainable Tourism in Rural Areas

Several definitions exist for sustainability and sustainable development. Sustainable development refers to “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development—WCED, 1987). This term pertains to the interrelationships of economic growth, environmental protection, and social equality, whereby each component reinforces and enhances the others (Zolfani, Maknoon, Sedaghat, and Zavadskas, 2015). One cannot overstate the importance of sustainability in the tourism sector, as it serves as a viable alternative to mass tourism, which often ignores the economic, environmental, and social impacts on destinations and communities (Fiorello and Bo, 2012).

Ecotourism, alternative tourism, soft tourism, rural tourism, and similar phrases denote tourism activities in remote rural areas and are widely acknowledged as sustainable strategies for the development of tourist-abundant regions (Cucari, Wankowicz and De Falco, 2019). The development of tourism in rural regions has surfaced as an effective remedy to the adverse impacts of mass tourism in developing nations. It functions as a comprehensive approach for enhancing living circumstances within the community. The major objective is for the community to construct a project that fosters sustainable growth and enhances relationships between residents and tourists (Amir, Ghapar, Jamal and Ahmad, 2015). Rural regions are often marked by adverse economic circumstances, insufficient employment prospects, social disintegration, population decline, and resource depletion due to industrial growth. In addition, many rural areas have natural and cultural resources that would appeal to tourists; however, they frequently lack the necessary infrastructure, services, and facilities, resulting in their exclusion from mass tourism itineraries (Guizzardi, Stacchini and Costa, 2022). In this regard, only appropriate and feasible tourism based on sustainable development can enhance and rejuvenate rural areas (Garau, 2015).

Rural tourism is fundamentally driven by motivations linked to the attributes of rural regions, regarded as natural, cultural, and traditional settings that offer wellness opportunities and expansive spaces for diverse sports and recreational activities (Carneiro, Lima and Silva, 2015). Rural tourism activities possess the following features: i) Sparse population density, ii) terrain and land utilization primarily characterized by agriculture and forestry, and iii) conventional social structure and lifestyle (UNWTO, 2024). A rural setting provides an urban tourist the chance to alleviate stress and reconnect with nature (Nicolaidis, 2020).

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