



## RURAL TOURISM: THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

**Dr. Abhishek Kumar Jha**  
MBA, Ph.D, MIMA ,  
L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga.



### ABSTRACT

*Tourism growth potential can be harnessed as a strategy for Rural Development. The growth of spending on leisure and recreation activities has significantly boosted the size and importance of the rural tourist industry. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 70 percent of the population resides in its 7 million villages. Now-a-days, rural tourism has turned into a leading economic activity and studies show that there is a positive relationship between developing rural tourism and increase in income. It can be a suitable way to enhance economic advantage and employment. This paper is a modest attempt to study the socio-economic importance of rural tourism.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Employment, Rural Tourism, Socio-Economic Importance.*

### INTRODUCTION

One of the basic concepts of tourism in rural areas is to benefit the local community through the creation of employment opportunities. Tourism has great capacity to generate large scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled manpower. It will create employment for the rural people and generate income for them; the only requirement is that the potentialities must be tapped in efficient manner. It can also develop

- social
- cultural and
- educational values.

Tourism development at both the national and international levels can make a positive contributions to the life of a nation provided the supply is well planned and of high standard and protects, respects the cultural heritage and values and the natural, social and human development. It indirectly indicates that in no way should the carrying capacity of a particular site be exceeded. Tourism has to be related to this, not that we should indiscriminately, inject tourists into a particular site, which has got a limited or no carrying capacity at all. Tourism must be directly correlated to the resources that are available and this aspects needs to be closely looked into very carefully. So, it is high time that we should develop and manage tourism from the resource point of view so that it is compatible with the environment and does not degrade it, is a major factor in achieving of sustainable development. Development of tourism itself has some positive and some negative effects.

### SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT

Tourism can bring both benefits and problems to the local society and its cultural patterns. Although more difficult to measure than economic or environmental effects, socio-cultural impacts are major considerations in developing tourism in many places. These impacts can be especially critical in countries like India and regions like Bihar that still have strong historical and cultural traditional society.

### SOCIO-CULTURAL BENEFITS

If tourism is well planned, developed and managed in a socially responsible manner, it can bring several types of socio-cultural benefits. These include the following:

- Tourism improves the living standards of people and helps pay for improvements to community facilities and services, if the economic benefits of tourism are well distributed. The development of tourism will enhance the living standard of people by increasing employment opportunities and developing other economic benefits. Fishing, agriculture and animal husbandry and other sectors of activities will expand to respond to additional needs.
- Tourism too conserves the cultural heritage of Bihar which otherwise might be lost as a result of only general development taking place. The old historical and Cultural patterns of music, dance, drama, dress, arts and crafts, customs, ceremonies, life styles, traditional economic activities and architectural styles of the state are important attractions for tourists. Tourism helps justify their conservation and can be the impetus for revitalizing cultural patterns.
- Tourism helps develop and maintain museums, churches, and other cultural facilities through the income generation by charging entry fee and entertainment expenses from tourists.
- Tourism reinforces or even renews a sense of pride by residents in their culture, when they observe tourists appreciating it.
- Tourism provides the opportunity for cross-cultural exchanges between tourists and residents who learn about, and come to respect, one another's cultures. These exchanges can best be achieved through educational and other types of special interest tours, village tourism and home visit programmes whereby tourists can arrange to visit local families.

### SOCIO-CULTURAL PROBLEMS

Tourism can generate some socio-cultural problems if not well planned, developed and managed, which include the following-

- **Overcrowding by tourists and loss of convenience for residents**, which leads to their resentment and sense of hostility toward tourism. In peak season periods, attractions and amenity features, restaurants, shopping and transportation facilities become so overcrowded by tourists that local people, particularly in places like Patna cannot easily use them.
- **Cultural degradation and lessening of a sense of cultural identity**: Deterioration of important archaeological and historical forts and important beaches is resulting from overuse by tourists.
- **Demonstration effect** of residents, especially young people, imitating the behavioural patterns and dress of tourists will adversely affect Bihar culture. Also, misunderstanding and conflicts arise between tourists and Tamil people because of different languages and customs.
- Social problems of drug abuse, excessive alcoholism, crime and prostitution may be worsened by tourism.

### PREVENTING SOCIO-CULTURAL PROBLEMS

As a general policy, tourism should be developed on a gradual basis so that the society has time to adapt to it, be educated about it, and learn how to participate in its benefits. Local residents should be involved in the planning and development process of tourism so that they can influence its decision-making

and feel that they are part of tourism. Some specific socio-cultural impact control measures can be applied in tourism areas as under:

- Maintain the authenticity of dance, music, drama, arts, crafts and dress, even though they are somewhat adapted for presentation to tourists.
- Preserve existing distinctive local architectural styles and encourage new development, including tourist facilities, to use local architectural motifs.
- Make certain that residents have convenient access to tourist attractions, amenity feature, and other facilities and apply visitor control measures to prevent overcrowding.
- Provide inexpensive or subsidized facilities for local residents to use. Residents may be allowed to pay lower admission fees to attraction features than those paid by foreign tourists.
- Public awareness programmes about tourism may be organised, utilising radio, television, newspapers, magazines and public meetings to combat agitation by NGOs against tourism.
- Inform tourists about the local society - its customs, dress codes, acceptable behavior in religious and other places, courtesies to observe in taking photographs, tipping policies, and any local problems.
- Train employees to work in tourism effectively, including language and social sensitivity training where needed.
- Apply strict control on drugs, crime and prostitution.

Rural tourism has been a comparatively new concept in Indian Tourism. This form of tourism has become popular in many parts of the world with the growing need for super segmentation of the tourism market (Negi, 1990). The idea behind rural tourism should be to create, presence and enhance the stake of local communities over locations for common good, and not for the benefit of any individual or firm. Rural Tourism in this encompasses all the activities that cater to national and international tourists through facilities that are owned, managed, and serviced by members of the village community and run essentially as a community based initiative (Khanka, 2011).

The level of tourism development in India has so far at a very low level is indicated by its paltry share to national income and to the world share (Bezbaruah, 2001). While tourism contributes to more than 70 percent in the national income of some of the countries like Malaysia and Singapore, the share to the national income of India is still dismally low at 2.5 percent. Though India shelters around 15 percent of the world population with its 2.5 percent of the world territory, accounts for only 0.40 percent in the world tourism market. At present India ranks 47<sup>th</sup> among the top 60 tourist destinations of the world. However, the prognostic picture of the Indian tourism is not because of lack of tourism potential, but because of non-exploitation of the ample bursting tourism potential she is blessed with (Bhatia, 1978). Tourism, in the twenty first century with its multisectoral spin-offs is believed to be the catalyst to bring about enhanced development and prosperity in India.

### **DIRECT ECONOMIC BENEFIT**

Bihar is, perhaps, one of the States rich both in ancient and architecture treasures, a great source of tourist attractions especially the Buddhist circuit for Foreign Tourists. The execution of 20 year Tourist Development Plan Bihar will have tremendous economic impact. The economic impact, as a result of the implementation of the Plan, can broadly be classified under three categories — Direct, Indirect and the Incidental.

The expenditure made by the tourists by way of accommodation, food, beverages, internal transport, shopping, entertainment and others during their stay form the receipts of the plan. This is calculated by calculating the tourists expenditure in various segments subsequently applying the Net Value Added to the Receipt Ratio.

Increasing flow of tourists will require creation of additional infrastructure and additional facilities, which help in increasing the average spending and duration of the stay. Revenue generated could also be utilised for maintenance etc. In the present analysis of Direct Benefits, the revenue so generated has not

been included. Also it is assumed that spending habits of the tourists remain unchanged during the plan period. There is also scope of imposing other charges for various facilities extended to the tourists like entry fee, etc.

**Table 1: Direct Benefits from Additional Tourist Arrivals after Implementation of the Tourism Development Plan**

Year	Additional Tourist Inflow (in Lakh)		Direct Receipt from the Domestic and Foreign Tourists (Rs in Crore)	Value added at a factor of 0.3854 (Rs in Crore)	Total Direct Benefit.(Col.(4)+ Col.(5) (Rs in Crore)
	Domestic	Foreign			
1	2	3	4	5	6
2002	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
2003	0.64	0.01	29.60	11.40	41.00
2004	1.37	0.01	58.80	22.66	81.46
2005	2.18	0.02	95.20	36.69	131.89
2006	3.09	0.03	135.60	52.26	187.86
2007	4.12	0.05	184.80	71.22	256.02
2008	5.27	0.06	234.80	90.49	325.29
2009	6.55	0.08	294.00	113.30	407.30
2010	7.97	0.13	370.80	142.90	513.70
2011	9.55	0.18	454.00	174.97	628.97
2012	11.31	0.23	502.40	193.62	696.02
2013	12.93	0.30	657.20	253.28	910.48
2014	15.05	0.37	850.00	327.59	1177.59
2015	17.39	0.46	879.60	338.99	1218.59
2016	19.98	0.55	1019.20	402.91	1422.11
2017	22.82	0.66	1176.80	453.57	1630.37
2018	25.96	0.78	1477.40	569.39	2046.79
2019	29.41	0.91	1540.40	593.67	2134.07
2020	33.20	1.06	1752.00	675.22	2427.00
2021	37.36	1.23	1986.40	765.56	2751.96

**Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar**

NB: As per Quick Survey, average number of stay in case of Domestic Tourist is 5 days and average per capita expenditure per day is Rs. 800 and in core of Foreign Tourist it is 8 days and Rs. 5000/- respectively.

### Indirect Benefit

The Indirect Benefits accrues due to multiplier effect as the tourist will be spending in different requirements to meet their demand. The additional resources so generated in the other sectors by chain reaction will lead to indirect output in the tourism sector. On multiplying the direct receipts by the respective multiplier and the Net Value Added multiplied by the respective income multiplier will give the indirect benefits on the proposed investment.

The Department of Tourism (Planning & Measurement Method) has adopted Output Multiplier at 1.058 and Income Multiplier at 1.412 in 1993. On the same analogy, Indirect Benefits from additional tourists arrivals are given below:

**Table 2: Indirect Benefits from Additional Tourists Arrivals on the Implementation of Tourism Development Plan**

Year	Direct Receipts (Rs in Crore)	Direct Value Added (Rs in Crore)	Output (Rs in Crore)[Col.(2)* Factor of 1.058]	Value Added (Rs in Crore) [Col.(2)* Factor of 1.412]	Total (Rs in Crore) [Col.(4)+Col.(5)]
1	2	3	4	5	6
2003	29.30	11.40	31.31	16.09	47.39
2004	58.80	22.66	62.21	31.99	94.20
2005	95.20	36.69	100.72	51.80	152.52
2006	156.60	52.26	165.68	73.79	239.47
2007	184.80	71.22	195.52	100.56	296.08
2008	234.80	90.49	248.52	127.77	376.19
2009	294.00	113.30	311.05	159.98	471.03
2010	370.80	142.90	392.30	201.77	594.07
2011	454.00	174.97	480.33	247.05	727.38
2012	502.40	193.62	531.34	273.39	804.73
2013	657.20	253.28	695.31	357.63	1,052.94
2014	850.00	327.59	899.30	462.55	1,361.85
2015	879.60	338.99	930.61	478.65	1,409.26
2016	1,019.20	402.91	1,078.31	568.91	1,647.22
2017	1,176.80	453.57	1,245.05	640.44	1,885.49
2018	1,477.40	569.39	1,563.09	803.98	2,367.07
2019	1,540.40	593.67	1,629.74	838.26	2,468.00
2020	1,752.00	675.22	1,853.61	953.41	2,807.02
2021	1,986.40	756.56	2,101.61	1,080.97	3,182.58

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar

It can be seen that with the boom of tourist traffic into those areas where there is poor planning, the tourist traffic, itself becomes counter productive to the tourist industry. Though the increase in tourism is a boom for the economic development of a nation, it cannot survive on its own. Tourism, economic development and environment should go hand in hand and a symbiotic relationship should exit between these three aspects. Tourism should not affect our ecosystem for whatever they are worth. The equilibrium between these three aspects is very delicate and their relations should not be strained further by adding of other new elements for whatsoever reason may be so.

## CONCLUSION

Tourism in rural areas offers an economic boost to small communities struggling to survive as young people leave for elsewhere by luring urbanities in the opposite directions and by protecting local mom and pop businesses against encroaching mega corporations. It will create employment for the rural people and generate income for them. The villagers will be able to provide better food and education for their children. They will have an additional source of income along with their agricultural income.

## REFERENCES:

1. James, Gracious (2014), Rural Employment Generation Through Tourism Development, Kurukshetra, Vol., No., October, p.47

2. Negi, J M S (1990), Tourism and Travel: Concepts and Principles, Gitanjalee Publishing House, New Delhi, p.11
3. Khanka, S.S (2011), Developing Tourism Entrepreneurship in India: Perspectives and Prospects, In: Y. Venkat Rao and G. Anjaneya Swamy (Eds.), Tourism Entrepreneurship, Excel Books, New Delhi, pp.112-131
4. Bezbaruah , M P (2001), Frontiers of New Tourism, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi, p.13
5. Bhatia, A K (1978), Tourism in India: History and Development, Sterling Publishing House, New Delhi, p.17
6. Websites of World Trade and Tourism Council and PHD chamber of commerce-[www.phdcoc.org](http://www.phdcoc.org)
7. Economic Impact of Tourism in India, Report of Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific-[www.](http://www.)
8. Website of World Trade and Tourism Council- [www.](http://www.)
9. Singh, T V (1975), Tourism and Tourism Industry, New Heights, New Delhi, p.21