

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION THROUGH STRATEGIES IN RURAL TOURISM IN INDI

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Abstract : Tourism with multidimensional activity has evolved one of the largest and lucrative industries of the new millennium. Tourism creates a host of multifarious downstream activities, which have the capacity to substantially involve a large number of people. Apart from generating income, being a labour intensive sector, it generates employment – mostly self-employment and promotes the overall development of the tourists destinations .Furthermore, with the increase in international tourism, the host country is in a position to earn valuable foreign exchange. The development of a strong platform around the concept of Rural Tourism is definitely useful for a country like India, where almost 70% of the population resides its 60 lakhs villages. Tourism has great capacity to generate large scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled. It can also develop social, cultural and educational values. India has diverse culture and geography which provides ample and unlimited scope for the growth of tourism business. India has diverse Agro-climatic conditions, diverse crops, people, culture, deserts,mountains, coastal, systems and islands which provides scope for promotion of all season, multi-location tourism products. This paper aims at providing an overview of Rural Tourism. The paper concludes with strategies to generate more employment through tourism in rural India.

Key words:Tourism, employment generation, potential, skill development, strategy.

INTRODUCTION:-

Tourism is an ever expanding service oriented industry with high growth potential for national as well as for international community. Today tourism has become a global as well as national level exhibition and description of places, prosperity, higher standards of living and the fast growing concept of paid holidays. The process of tourism incorporates man, space and time as its principal components. Assuch, it has far reaching, significance and implications of a socio-economic nature alongside the environment ones. There is hardly any other economic activity which is able to generate as mass added value, employment and foreign currency and thatalso at a low cost.

WTO has estimated that there will be 1.6 billion international touristsby the year 2020 and Asia will emerge as the second region to be the most visited in the world. India being rich in cultural and natural heritage is likely to experience its share in global tourism. India, however, faces two major challenges in the globalised world i.e. exploitation of tourism potential and designing strategies for tapping such potential. Therefore, 'Tourism 2020 Vision' document has identified the following priorities:

- # Strategic Marketing
- # Product differentiation and Quality improvement
- # Sustainable Tourism Development
- # Private –Public Partnership
- # Improving Brand Image and Positioning
- # Strategic Planning and Management of Resources
- # Developments of New Destinations
- # Use of electronic and internet services for facilitation and Data Base Preparation

It has been estimated that India's travel and tourism potentials can provide its economy substantial resources in the coming years. It is expected that tourism has potential to provide 7 million new jobs, provided that potential of tourism resources is effectively exploited. The potential of tourism in India can be viewed against the global scenarios. Globally tourism has touched \$476 billion tourism receipts with 10.6% of the global workforce, 10.2% contribution to GDP, generating tax revenues of \$655 billion and gross output of \$3.4 trillion. However, India's share in global tourism is dismal. It is to be noted that tourism in India during last 50 years has shown tremendous progress. From a beginning of 17000 international tourists in 1950 contributing Rs. 7.7 crore to the economy the present arrival of 2.64 million tourists contributing about \$3.5 billion in foreign earnings.

THE RURAL TOURISM CONCEPT :

Indian Rural Tourism has to be seen as an alternative to mainstream tourism. Indian village life is full of fresh air, green pastures and a wide range of rural art and handicrafts, folksongs, folkdance, rural sports, rural medicines, yoga, meditation, traditional health care, organic foods, ethnic life style, unique customs and culture. Urban settlers always yearn for breaking the drudgery of city life and look for fresh habitat, simplistic ways of life and a less stressful environment. International tourists look for original places, authentic traditions and culture, and cheaper holiday destinations.

SCOPE OF TOURISM IN RURAL INDIA :

1. Rich rural tradition of art, craft and culture:

Tourism in rural areas is seen as a major avenue and the Government of India has given priority to tourism as it has great potential to create jobs and to ensure 'Sustainable livelihood'. The Ministry of Tourism Government of India has launched the Scheme for Rural Tourism in Xth Five Year Plan period in order to promote village tourism as primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits in various geographical regions all over India.

2. Cost Effectiveness:

The cost of food, accommodation, recreation and travel is least in rural areas. This widens the tourist base. The concept of Rural Tourism takes travel and tourism to the larger population, widening the scope of tourism due to its cost effectiveness.

3. Labour Intensive:

Tourism in rural areas is highly labour intensive and a valuable source of employment and income in rural areas, especially for those with limited access to labour market, such as women, youth and migrants.

4. Curiosity about rural life style:

The urban population having roots in villages always have had the curiosity to learn about sources of food, plants, animals, raw materials like wood, handicrafts, handlooms, languages, culture, tradition, costumes and rural lifestyle.

5. Targeted towards all segments:

Villages provide recreational opportunities to all age groups i.e. children, young, middle and old age male, female, in total to the whole family at cheaper cost.

6. Motivated towards Nature:

Busy urban population is leaning towards nature. Birds, animals, crops, mountains, water bodies, villages provide totally different atmosphere to urban population.

TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT GENERATION IN INDIA :

According to Planning Commission, the tourism sector creates more jobs per million rupees of

investment than any other sector of the economy and is capable of providing employment to a wide spectrum of job seekers, from the unskilled to the specialised, even in the remote parts of the country. The sector's employment-generation potential has also been highlighted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), which says India's Tourism sector is expected to be the second-largest employer in the world.

India has diverse culture and geography which provides ample and unlimited scope for the growth of tourism industry. Tourism can provide employment for youth and women, men of the community may perceive that tourism provides those few viable, respectable and thus acceptable opportunities for economic livelihood. In economic terms, village tourism can create various self-employment opportunities and informal jobs. Tourism is seasonal so, in urban areas, seasonal dependency of most jobs in tourism sector is seen as a disadvantage for the security of earnings, but it can be of advantage in rural areas for farmers who are able to work during off season and still be in agriculture.

The existing schemes for tourism development support the development of infrastructure in rural areas. The Ministry of Tourism has joined hands with the UNDP for capacity building – around 153 rural tourism projects have been sanctioned in 28 States/Union Territories including 36 rural sites where UNDO offers support in capacity building. Under the 'Visit India 2009' scheme, around 15 rural tourism sites were selected as rural eco-holiday sites.

THE OBJECTIVES :

The objectives of developing rural tourism will include : creating awareness about village tourism both among the host community and the tourists for fostering tourist culture; providing for the development of village tourism in the holistic sense, its linkage with various rural development programmes in promoting the village economy covering all sections of the village; and placing one of the government departments like Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in the central role as most of the sectors pertaining to rural industry are within the competence and ambit of KVIC.

Tourism Organisations are classified as:

- (A) Travel Agency
- (B) Tour Operators
- (C) Hotels and Other accommodations
- (D) Roads and Railways Transport Agencies
- (E) Air and Sea Transport Agencies
- (F) Information Centres
- (G) Tourism Development Corporations
- (H) Tours and Travels Organisations
- (I) Travel Associations

STRATEGIES FOR RURAL TOURISM :

Strategies for rural tourism can be only illustrative at this stage, as each destination will have specific requirements. The following points have strategic implications on Tourism sector in India.

1. Identifying the location, measuring the potential, restoring eco-friendly environment.
2. Building social infrastructure - a canteen, an open air theatre, display facilities for local.
3. Developing entertainment and information sites around regional themes, resources and identities.
4. Encouraging tourism development programmes that include benefits for and utilisation by local communities and supporting small business development opportunities to them.
5. Promotion of environment conservation, protection, cultural and natural heritage conservation in tourism development programmes.
6. Imparting education, training and skills for managing tourist's destinations and extending in management of tourism services.
7. Evolving marketing strategies for tourists that can travel in the off season and less sensitive weather conditions.
8. Improving the efficiency of government organisations, built environment and physical infrastructure.
9. Expansion of market awareness in new markets particularly in rural and lesser known tourism destinations.
10. Supporting programmes on the use and potential of electronic data base and linking service providers

with regional offices, destinations and intermediaries.

11. Increasing the availability of short-break packages targeted to regional markets.

12. Creating a brand and product development programme with special forms destinations and tourism resources.

13. Adopting modern promotional and sales techniques such as internet, websites, e-mail etc. For tourism development and promotion.

14. Tourism development in difficult areas can be realised a sustained partnership between the public and private sectors complying to an agreed strategy. Tourism has become a multiple activity focussed with integration of shopping and operation, entertainment and education and culture and meeting business centre development. As tourism industry grows, the competition is likely to grow intense. To face the competition and more tourists, tourism markets have to embrace all the marketing tools available. Their main challenge is to create a distinctive position in the mind of customers, a position which can differentiate the destination from the competitors. The Policy makers have recognised the value of tourism is the economics of their regions. Strategic management of tourism involves managerial process of setting organisation's goals and objectives analysis, planning and implementation of strategies. Moreover, environment and resource analysis, man power planning, corporate planning, business strategy formulation, target marketing, positioning and management of resource etc. are some of the crucial aspects of strategic management in tourism sector.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, TRAINING AND ORIENTATION :

In all the above strategies and activities, training and orientation has to be given to prepare officials and personnel to handle this new concept. There is need of improving quality of human capital by education and skill formation. It overcomes the imbalances in the supplies of various kinds of labour in various activities of tourism. Different departments have to converge to provide this orientation. Existing tourist establishments can be used to impart this training. The courses should include understanding village life in all its dimensions- economic, social, cultural and so on. The key is to identify our rural heritage and uniqueness, which can be presented and marketed. At the same time, we must learn to communicate and cater to the tourists seeking these things. Skill Development Programme and Training are very much essential to deal with various aspects of tourism activity. Technical, linguistic and communicational skills should be enhanced in the work force of tourism. Persons educated in Arts, for whom there may not be enough openings in industrial sector. In this case there may be need to induce such people to go in for education and training which are needed by tourism sector.

CONCLUSION :

Rural Tourism has turned into a leading economic activity and studies show a positive relationship between developing rural tourism and increase in income. One of the basic concept 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 labourers. Rural Tourism will make at least three important contributions to tourism sector in India. It will provide an alternative to conventional mainstream tourism centered on historical monuments and beaches. Second, it will feed the new trend in national and international tourism, the quest for native culture and natural setting. Third, it will rejuvenate the rural sector which has so far remained neglected. Tourism on its own will not be able to provide 100% employment through the year, it is not a guarantee. Indian Tourism needs a new approach and expansion to rural areas.

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