

Invisible Lacunae In Responsible Tourism Management In South India

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ABSTRACT

As tourism industry started flourishing and paved ways for a country's economic structure Governments and stake holders started pondering their minds and efforts towards creating an effective and responsible tourism atmosphere in their respective countries. Major obstacles in India in regard to this have been identified as stringent, non-friendly or non-user friendly regulations for visitors especially in the visa matters and other legal purposes. Safety concerns especially for women travelers and lesser transport and infrastructural facilities to add misery to some of the visitors. But a major concern which is not really visible or discussed much is found to be hindering tourist movements to interior India. The mindset of the majority of the Indian rural population need to be educated enough to accommodate and accept foreign tourists, accepting their cultural and behavioral standards, to some extent their dress code too. Isolated incidents of mass protests against the tourists entering their rural areas are being reported. If this is not curtailed or rectified effectively more modern tourists who wish to explore deep into rural India will be in trouble. Some unhealthy hygienic problems prevailing in rural India may also mar the tourists from exploring further. Governments and tourist promoters could easily tackle this problem and manage the tourism in a responsible way by conducting some planned awareness programmes in such areas. India has got a rich tradition of “*Adhithi Devo Bhava*” meaning the tourists or visitors who come to our houses should be treated as God. This campaign alone could make our rural people responsible towards visiting tourists.

Key Words: Rural Tourism, Responsible Tourism, Adhithi Devo Bhava,

INTRODUCTION

Rural development is really a point of deep concern in India where majority of population (68%) is still living in villages in condition of extreme poverty, ill- health and illiteracy; and are poorly organized for effective participation in programs of their own welfare. The disempowered populace lack technical knowledge and have no access to resources except human capital for improving their economic condition. Keeping in view the inadequacy and inconsistency that the economy faces, it is essential to pursue a suitable policy with a deliberate rural focus and strategic developmental outreach towards the disadvantaged districts / regions of the economy. The success of rural Indian economy is dependant to a great extent on the growth of agriculture

sector with no other considerable alternate sector that may be enriching for the rural Indian economy. Thus any policy measure to be introduced in this sphere has to be taken up in right earnest.

TOURISM POTENTIAL IN INDIA

Tourism in India, offering large and diverse range of tourism products all across the length and breadth of the country, still remains quite insignificantly low both in terms of share of the world arrivals and tourism receipts, despite having much larger share in terms of geography, better tourism products and still the more – better prospects of developing manmade tourism. Tourism is being utilized by many underdeveloped / remote areas across the world as the best instrument for growth of neglected, remote and rural / backward areas. Tourism in India can ensure significant development in terms of the infrastructure at the destinations, generate local employment, and induce multi- sector overall growth of the economy and above all effect into the optimum share of global tourist arrivals and earnings that still remains elusive.

Tourism business is assumed as human industry because of its significant importance of manpower working in it. The human factor is the most significant one, since it is the people who have to use all other resources. The people in tourism industry are service-producers and service-providers as well. They are also managers for the service and planners who can create added-value for tourism product. However, when it comes to retailing the tourism products, we fail to assimilate the human development or the local communities who are not only beneficiaries but are also the epitome of India's culture and ethos. Many destinations or tourism products lack an insufficient promotional activity for rural / underdeveloped areas although endowed with sufficient tourism product. This arises out of putting marginal relevance of these products as a cultural tourism destination, the seasonal nature of tourism itself, or insufficient hospitality infrastructure. The question is that how local community can offer a viable solution for tourism development and removes its barriers in local communities? This can be done by increasing the community capacity in tourism.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Smith, Baugh-Littlejohns & Thompson (2001) describe community capacity building as the "essence of development". The development of such areas for tourism requires the need to cater to the requirements of the local community. Social and economic benefits must firstly benefit the local population and then tourism. Tourism can also serve as an instrument for effective marketing for the underdeveloped / rural areas as well as generating employment for such areas.

Discussing this issue, Martha Frederick (1992), in the book, "Tourism as a Rural Economic Development Tool: An Exploration of the Literature", gives an effective solution to the above mentioned problems. She considers that tourism can be an important source of jobs for economically underdeveloped / rural areas. Tourism offers business opportunities to local

residents and can serve as a vehicle for marketing a place to potential residents and firms. In tourism sector, family firms or the local communities can be effectively utilized for retailing the Indian tourism beyond the borders of the country.

Rhodri Thomas, Gareth Shaw, and Stephen J. Page (2011), mention how small firms are important from various points of view, all leading to the consolidation of the industry towards building from a developing state to robust economy.

Further, Jean-Luc Arregle, Michael A. Hitt, David G. Sirmon and Philippe Very (2007) appropriates social capital theory and argue that family firms are unique as they work as a single entity, where at least two forms of social capital coexist: the family's and the firm's. Finally, they suggest the family firms' insights are generalizable to several other types of organizations more so often with service orientation. Tourism, being the highly labor intensive activity, creates a high proportion of employment opportunities for low and semi skilled workers, particularly for poor, female (Women make up 70% of the labor force in tourism) and young workers (Report of the Working Group on Tourism, 12th Five-Year Plan, 2011). In India, the technical planning and assistance can prove crucial to tourism development success for many small communities with limited resources in the short run and may solve the long run shortfall of human resource development for growth in Indian tourism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives for the present study have been planned to understand dynamics of Invisible Lacunae in Responsible Tourism Management in India. These are:

1. To identify the possibilities and opportunities responsible Tourism Management in South India.
2. To examine the Invisible Lacunae in the responsible tourism Management in South India:
3. To study the potential of foreign tourists in various rural communities based activities.
4. To study the engagement of various communities based activities where tourists do/can participate.
5. To study the mindset and role of rural communities in the promotion of responsible Tourism.
6. To study the major obstacles in responsible tourism in south India.
7. To study the satisfaction level of tourists in the responsible tourism in South India.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Three hypotheses have been developed to assess the responsible tourism in the light of research objectives.

Hypothesis 1

H0 There is low potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India.

H1 There is high potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India.

Hypothesis 2

H0 Tourists coming to rural areas of India do not participate in community based activities.

H1 Tourists coming to rural areas of South India to participate in any community based activities.

Hypothesis 3

H0 The rural communities have no positive mindset and role in the promotion of responsible Tourism

H1 The rural communities have positive mindset and role in the promotion of responsible Tourism

Hypothesis 4

H0 There is no major obstacles in responsible tourism in rural south India.

H1 There is major obstacles in responsible tourism in rural south India.

Hypothesis 5

H0 Tourists are not satisfied with Rural Based Tourism in South India.

H1 Tourists are satisfied with Rural Based Tourism in South India.

RESEARCH DESIGN**Sample Selection**

The sample of the study included different stakeholders in tourism mainly hosts/communities, tourists and Government representatives. The communities, tourists were contacted in the sampled villages while government officials were contacted at their respective offices. Sampling for primary data collection has been done at two levels; first for choosing villages from each selected states of South India and second for selecting respondents from different groups in these villages. Two villages have been selected from two states in India. Total four villages have been selected where tourism is active through rural tourism scheme (table 1).

Table.1 Sample selection of the Villages under Study

Sl.No	States of India (South India)	Villages/Districts of each States
1	Kerala	a) Chirayinkeezhu (Trivandrum, Kerala)
		b) Mananthavadi (Wayanadu, Kerala)
2	Tamil Nadu	a) Kumarakovil (Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu)
		b) Thovalai (Thirunelveli, Tamil Nadu)

Source: Primary Data

Purposive sampling was used to collect the data depending on the availability of tourists and hosts in the sample villages at the time of data collection. It has been assumed that this would not disturb results as the sample villages are small in size that is also a typical feature of villages of South India. The distribution of villagers, tourists and from the selected villages is shown in table 2

Table.2 Distribution of Samples

Name of Villages	Number of Sampled Villages	Number of Sampled Tourists	
		Domestic	International
Chirayinkeezhu (Kerala)	50	28	22
Mananthavadi (Kerala)	50	30	20
Kumarakovil (Tamil Nadu)	50	35	15
Thovalai (Tamil Nadu)	50	25	25
TOTAL	200	118	82

Source: Primary Data**Data Collection**

The data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. 50 sample respondents were selected from each Village under study. A total of 200 samples were selected for the study (100 samples each from the state of Kerala and Tamil Nadu of South India) Primary data was collected from villagers and tourists with the help of structured questionnaires. The survey was intended to understand the views of local communities and tourists on responsibility based Tourism Development through their participation in it. Data collected from government was also primary but interview method was used here. Secondary data was collected from government agencies, research reports, statistical reports and articles published in news papers, electronic media and websites.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed through descriptive statistics such as percent analysis, mean, standard deviation and factor analysis. SWOT analysis, matrix and Chi-Square, Correlation were used for qualitative data.

Limitations of Study

A few difficulties arose in the fieldwork. One of the biggest challenges was the collection of official statistical data of tourist arrivals at different tourists visiting villages. The fieldwork was also constrained by the limits of time and budget. The severe climate conditions and inaccessibility to these areas added more hardness to the fieldwork.

Use and Application of study findings

The study is confined to the selected villages of South India. The scope of the study is limited to investigate the perception of host community on selected issues related to responsibility based tourism development in selected villages of South India. Experience and expectations of host community from growing tourism were given due attention. The study also examines the perception and profile of tourists in two broad segments: domestic and international of a comparative study.

Objective 1

The first objective was to identify the possibilities and opportunities responsible Tourism Management in South India.

Identification and mapping of resources is an extensive process and the information for the same was collected through observation, interview with locals, tourists and government officials. The identification and mapping of tourist resources in South India has been done on the presumption that all natural and cultural resources of the state are suitable for responsibility based Tourism Development as these are very fragile and cannot be maintained without the active involvement of the community.

Objective 2 and Hypothesis 1

The second objective was to examine the Invisible Lacunae in the responsible tourism Management in South India, it has been divided into four sub objectives and hypothesis was framed for the same as follows:

i. To study the potential of foreign tourists in various rural communities based activities.

Hypothesis 1

H0 There is low potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India.

H1 There is high potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India.

The potential was assessed with the help of awareness of tourists about South India and rural holidays, their participation in community based activities and involvement of communities in various activities for tourists.

In the view of above H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. (There is high potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India)

P value is less than the significance level so reject the null hypothesis (5% level of significance, Value 1.96 for Normal Distribution)

ii. To study the engagement of various communities based activities where tourists do/can participate.**Hypothesis 2**

H0 Tourists coming to rural areas of South India do not participate in community based activities.

H1 Tourists coming to rural areas of South India do participate in community based activities.

Data analysis shows that both domestic and international tourists are extremely interested in various community based activities like a day hikes to pilgrimage sites near village area, natural trail nearby village and cultural shows. Some of the international tourists like to explore the area by involving in trekking, bird and butterfly watching.

In the view of above H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. (Tourists coming to rural areas of India do participate in community based activities)

P value is less than the significance level so reject the null hypothesis. (5% level of significance, Value 1.96 for Normal Distribution)

iii. To study the mindset and role of rural communities in the promotion of responsible Tourism in South India**Hypothesis 3**

H0 The rural communities have no positive mindset and role in the promotion of responsible Tourism

H1 The rural communities have positive mindset and role in the promotion of responsible Tourism

The analyses were done on the basis of the mindset and role of communities of rural people in the South areas of the India. It is understood that the mindset of the majority of the South Indian rural population have no cooperative approach towards activities of foreign tourists, accepting their cultural and behavioral standards, to some extend their dress code too.

In the view of above H1 is rejected and H0 is accepted. (The rural communities have no positive mindset and role in the promotion of responsible Tourism)

P value is more than the significance level so accept the null hypothesis. (5% level of significance, Value 1.96 for Normal Distribution)

iv. To study the major obstacles in responsible tourism in south India.

Hypothesis 4

H0 There are no major obstacles in responsible tourism in rural south India.

H1 There are major obstacles in responsible tourism in rural south India.

In the above study revealed that there were some obstacles in the responsible tourism in rural south India. Major obstacles in India in regard to this have been identified as stringent, non-friendly or non-user friendly regulations for visitors especially in the visa matters and other legal purposes. Safety concerns especially for women travelers and lesser transport and infrastructural facilities to add misery to some of the visitors. But a major concern which is not really visible or discussed much is found to be hindering tourist movements to interior India.

In the view of above H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. (There are major obstacles in responsible tourism in rural south India)

P value is less than the significance level so reject the null hypothesis. (5% level of significance, Value 1.96 for Normal Distribution)

Objective 3 and Hypothesis 5

3. To study the satisfaction level of tourists in the responsible tourism in South India.

H0 Tourists are not satisfied with Rural Based Tourism in South India.

H1 Tourists are satisfied with Rural Based Tourism in South India.

The analysis was based on the satisfaction with overall tour experience in villages of South India. The tourists were very much satisfied with the overall tour experiences in the villages and due to this they pleased and decided to visit this place again the visit to these

villages exceeds their expectations. They strongly recommend their friends and relatives to visit these villages because the tradition and culture of South India is unique.

It is inferred that, tourists are very much satisfied with overall tour experience in villages. Therefore, H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. (Tourists are satisfied with Rural Based Tourism in South India)

P value is less than the significance level so reject the null hypothesis. (5% level of significance, Value 1.96 for Normal Distribution)

RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. The identification and mapping of tourist resources in South India has been done on the presumption that all natural and cultural resources of the state are suitable for responsibility based Tourism Development as these are very fragile and cannot be maintained without the active involvement of the community.
2. The potential was assessed with the help of awareness of tourists there is low potential of Responsible Tourism Management in rural South India.
3. On the basis of the study it is identified that Tourists coming to rural areas of South India to participate in any community based activities.
4. The tourists were very much satisfied with the overall tour experiences in the villages and due to this they pleased and decided to visit this place again the visit to these villages exceeds their expectations.
5. The mindset of the majority of the South Indian rural population have no cooperative approach towards activities of foreign tourists, accepting their cultural and behavioral standards, dress code.
6. Three are major obstacles in India, stringent, non-friendly or non-user friendly regulations for visitors especially in the visa matters and other legal purposes. Safety concerns especially for women travelers and lesser transport and infrastructural facilities to add misery to some of the visitors. But a major concern which is not really visible or discussed much is found to be hindering tourist movements to interior India.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Using the research findings, the study has established the following recommendations and suggestions.

1. There should be tourist friendly regulations, proper guidelines and code of conduct for the promotion of rural tourism in south India.

2. Provide Education and Proper Training to local rural communities in tourism activities of the respective States of South India.
3. The effective involvement of local rural people in the tourism decision making process, in the sharing of tourism benefits and in tourism's contribution towards poverty alleviation.
4. Organize more tourist friendly shows and handcraft sales which help the rural people to earn income for their livelihood.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though there are many obstacles in the rural tourism in the south India, like stringent, non-friendly or non-user friendly regulations for visitors especially in the visa matters and other legal purposes. Safety concerns especially for women travelers and lesser transport and infrastructural facilities to add misery to some of the visitors. The mindset of the majority of the Indian rural population need to be educated enough to accommodate and accept foreign tourists, accepting their cultural and behavioral standards, to some extent their dress code too. Rural tourism has many potential benefits for the rural population in south India including employment, social benefits, self reliance, education of children, business opportunities etc. The rural tourism also promotes the economic structure of the country. Governments and tourist promoters could easily tackle this problem and manage the tourism in a responsible way by conducting some planned awareness activities

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