

RURAL TOURISM IN BIHAR: ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

In India where 70 percent of the population live in rural areas and are dependent solely on agriculture, newer opportunities need to be created and rural tourism is certainly on top of the charts of fulfilling this dream. Rural India has much to offer beyond agriculture. It has a great potential for different segments of tourism like ecotourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, farm tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism and the like. Although tourism has started receiving some attention from last decade, but rural tourism was never given priority. Worldwide tourism is ranked as the second highest revenue generating industry next to oil industry. So it may be differentiate between different types of tourists so that the purpose of visit could be understood and analysed.

Key Words: BMI, Natural Resources, Tourism.

INTRODUCTION:

There are many bottlenecks in Bihar tourism such as skill gaps and consequent struggle for industry to meet the demand for qualified personnel. Successful human resources management in the shape of training and education is crucial to bridge this demand and supply gap to achieve the economic prosperity that can be occurred through tourism. At the outset this industry is not considered a very attractive choice for the best talent at the entry level. And a good proportion of talent joining this industry chums to other domains. This situation is further compounded by new development such as Business Model Innovation (BMI) resulting in focus on extensive use of new technologies. This is creating a demand for newer skills in the industry already reeling under workforce

scarcity. A few issues requiring immediate attention are shortage of manpower, quality of manpower seasonal employment, manpower attrition, shift in technology, working Ambience.

CHALLENGES IN RURAL TOURISM IN BIHAR:

The major challenges are need to preserve the environment and natural resources, the need for education, proper understanding for both tourists and local people, and the need to generate a democratic movement which helps people at all levels to participate in tourism development. Also they need to focus on occupation training, handicraft promotion, and improvement of both the landscape and the basic infrastructure, to increase the villagers quality of life by creating a healthy environment. The cooperative system in rural tourism can be an effective approach in bringing positive impact in rural areas. Local people can monitor and control the negative impacts of tourism on their own society, if they have an equal stake and authority in management and development.

Along with these challenges, there are Legislation Problem: Tourism is a part of entertainment so all hotels, motels and cottage having license are paying high taxes to the government. But in rural tourism as rural people will also be involved, there should be a provision of tax holiday.

Insufficient financial support: Government has just started promoting rural tourism. Central and State government should encourage rural tourism by providing support to start the project. It will create employment in rural areas and will also help in flow of fund from urban to rural. It can help in preventing the migration of people from rural area to urban areas. Sufficient financial support is required for essential developments like human resource, enforcement of rules and regulations, building of physical infrastructures and land use management.

Lack of local involvement: Since the rural people lack knowledge and skills, they may get the jobs of unskilled worker. The basic concept behind rural tourism is to emphasize on participation of rural people. But in practice local people are seldom involved in decision making, planning and implementing policies. Most of the rural people do not have much knowledge of tourism, and are misled by outside investors who hope to take most of the economic benefits from rural areas. Consequently, local people become confused about what kind of tourism they want to establish in their own area.

Lack of Communication skills: Language and education is the basic hindrance in communication. The ability to communicate effectively is very essential. Much of success will depend on your ability to give warm welcome to tourists. After seeing a historic site or buildings if tourist generates some interest to know more and if there is no one to answer those questions, it will create negative impacts.

Lack of proper physical infrastructures: Nearly half of the villages in Bihar do not have all weather roads. just getting to some of these villages is very difficult task. For developing tourism in rural areas, not only all-weather roads but also safe drinking water, electricity, telephone, safety and security etc. are needed.

Business Planning skills: For any business, technical knowledge and skill is required to organise and maintain it. With the help of government or non-government organisation, business plan could be prepared. But the villagers should participate in developing and implementing the project on rural tourism otherwise it will not give much benefit to the rural people. Advertisement and sales promotion will play a very important role in creating awareness and attracting the customers. It can also be promoted through print media, brochures, public relations etc.

PROSPECTS:

In spite of mass poverty, social chaos, dirt, squalor and destitution, Bihar has a great potentiality to be one of the most important tourist destinations in the country. The potentiality is to be converted into tourist product by adopting proper marketing strategy. Bihar had been the centre of country's culture and civilization. The history of Bharat has been shaped by Magadh whose boundary extended to Kabul and Kandhar Gautam Budha attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, Bihar to get emancipation from the miseries of worldly life. Patliputra today known as Patna had been the centre of power of Magadh empire. 24th Tirthankar was born at Vaishali. Famous mathematician Arya Bhatt lived at Patliputra. Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagrah movement from Champaran in Bihar. Besides being sacred place for Buddhists and Jams, it is a place of pilgrimage of Silchs as Guru Govind Singh was born at Patna.

The historical and archaeological movements have a wise scope in Bihar. Remains of Nalanda and Vikramshila reveal the educational and cultural attainment of the state. The statue of Yakshini made of sandstone about 2000 years ago which attracted the world's attention at Indian festival at Moscow, New York, London and Paris, is spreading its grandeur at Patna museum. Thus, Bihar is a multi-dimensional state with a variety of tourist attractions and facilities. Bihar's rich, religious and cultural past has created distinctive architectural styles. temple towns and famous monuments. Rural tourism in Bihar which has been neglected so far has a vast potential in itself. Rural Bihar has rich traditions of art, craft and culture along with the pollution free environment. Therefore, the rural tourism has the capacity of attracting both foreign and domestic tourists.

CONCLUSION:

A demand for newer skills in the industry already reeling under workforce scarcity. A few issues requiring immediate attention are shortage of manpower, quality of manpower seasonal employment, manpower attrition, shift in technology, working Ambience. Further there is immense potential in tourism that has to exploit new opportunities.

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