

IMPORTANCE OF RURAL TOURISM IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BIHAR

***DR. TEKNATH SINGH**

**M.Com, Ph.D*

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. One of the basic concepts of tourism in rural areas is to benefit the local community through the creation of employment opportunities. This Paper is a modest attempt to study the socio-economic impact of rural tourism in Bihar.

Key Words: Bihar, Employment, Rural Tourism, Socio-economic Development.

INTRODUCTION

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).² 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).³

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).⁴ 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 47th 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).⁵ 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.

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION THROUGH TOURISM

According to Economic Census, 1990, there were 61,421 Hotel and Restaurant Enterprises in Bihar of which 39,822 were “Own Account Enterprises” and 21,599 “Establishments”. The “Own Account Enterprises” are defined as those which are owned and operated with the help of household labour and the “Establishment” are those which employ hired workers. In Bihar, employment in Hotel and Restaurant Enterprises were 1.44 Lakh of which 0.62 Lakh were in OAE and 81,870 in Establishments.

Tourism is highly labour intensive in comparison to other sectors of economy. WTTC and PHDCC Study indicate Rs 10 Lakh spent on Hotel and Tourism Industry generate 89 jobs while in agriculture it generates 45 jobs and manufacturing 13 jobs. The Labour Capital Ratio was calculated at 1985-86 Prices. In 1994-1995, the direct employment in Tourism Sector was 2.4 per cent of the Total Labour Force. The Tourism Industry as a whole, taking all segments together, ratio is 47.5 jobs, still higher than other sectors.⁶ According to the Economic & Social Commission for Asia & Pacific (ESCAP) in their Report “Economic Impact of Tourism in India”, 1.2 international tourists provide employment to one person while 17 domestic tourists generate employment to one person. The significant feature of tourism is that it employs large number of women- educated, uneducated, skilled, un-skilled also generate employment opportunities particularly in remote and backward areas.⁷

According to industry estimate sex ratio in hospitality sector in India 85 percent male and 15 per cent female. While internationally the sex ratio is almost equal at 54 and 46 per cent respectively. The Employment Multiplier Factor in Tourism Sector is 2.36 that is direct employment to one person creates job for another 1.26 persons in the economy. The Department of Tourism (Planning and Measurement Methods) has adopted 1.358 as Employment Multiplier. By using the adopted Employment Multiplier (1.358) indirect employment after implementation of Tourism Development Plan would be 22.82 Lakh and direct employment to 16.81 Lakh persons in 2021.

Table 3.1: Generation of Employment on the Implementation of Tourism Development Plan

Year	Additional Tourist Inflow (in Lakh)		Direct Employment (no. in Lakh)			Indirect Employment at a factor of 1.358 (in Lakh)
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic	Foreign	Other	
2002	64.24	0.91	3.78	0.76	4.54	6.16
2003	68.73	0.96	4.04	0.80	4.84	6.57
2004	73.54	1.01	4.32	0.84	5.16	7.00
2005	78.68	1.08	4.63	0.90	5.53	7.51
2006	84.18	1.15	4.95	0.96	5.91	8.02
2007	90.07	1.23	5.29	1.02	6.31	8.57
2008	96.37	1.31	5.67	1.09	6.76	9.18
2009	103.11	1.40	6.06	1.16	7.22	9.80
2010	110.32	1.52	6.49	1.26	7.75	10.52
2011	118.04	1.65	6.94	1.37	8.31	11.28
2012	126.30	1.79	7.43	1.49	8.92	12.11
2013	134.82	1.95	7.93	1.62	9.55	12.97
2014	144.25	2.12	8.48	1.76	10.24	13.90
2015	154.34	2.31	9.08	1.92	11.00	14.94
2016	165.14	2.51	9.71	2.09	11.08	15.04
2017	176.69	2.73	10.39	2.27	12.66	17.19
2018	189.06	2.97	11.12	2.47	13.59	18.45
2019	202.29	3.23	11.89	2.69	14.58	19.79
2020	216.45	3.52	12.73	2.93	15.66	21.26
2021	231.60	3.83	13.62	3.19	16.81	22.82

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Bihar

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.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Tourism can bring both benefits and problems to the environment. Environmental impact is the major consideration in any development activity.

Positive Environmental Impacts

- Tourism helps justify and pay for conservation of important natural areas and wildlife, including riverine environment, and development of parks, historical monuments, protected and reserve forests and parks, because these are major attractions for tourists.
- Tourism helps improve the envisaged environmental quality of the area as tourists like to visit places that are attractive, clean and non-pollutant. Well sited and designed tourist facilities, themselves can contribute to the attractive appearance of both urban and rural environments. Improvement of infrastructure, especially of water supply and sewage and solid waste disposal, also contribute to improved environmental quality.
- Tourism helps in revival of dying arts and crafts. It is due to enhanced tourism only that all our rare artistic wealth is finding its way to prosperous countries through both legitimate and illegitimate channels.

Negative Environmental Impacts

If tourism development is not well planned, developed and managed, it can generate several types of negative environmental impacts:

- Development of mountainous tourist spots will involve construction and development of Roads and Highways through forest areas. This in turn is likely to increase the vehicular traffic along with the

pedestrian in this region. This activity is likely to create environmental disturbances, which will directly have an adverse impact on the surrounding vegetation and mountain ecology. This does not mean that road in the hills are not important, but they need to be constructed in coherence with the terrain, nature of geological functions etc.

- Development of Tourism indirectly has an impact on the wildlife, which is likely to be affected due to large scale hunting, by the invasion of tourists into natural habitat for photography and filming etc. Then impact on large scale mammals and birds is apparent. If tourism is to be handled on a sustainable basis we must pay much attention for the maintenance of tourism infrastructure and maintenance as well as of the wildlife. Large-scale invasion of tourists to national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserve forests also affects the feeding and breeding habitats of the wild animals.
- Another major impact of increased tourist activity is that large scale of tourist developments also brings a large number of people together which leads to marked changes that are detrimental to the eco-system as a whole. The influx of large number of tourists is also likely to increase the piles of litter and garbage. These will attract rodents, which in turn draw bigger animals and birds which alters the entire habitat
- With the increase in the number of tourists due to availability of better infrastructure facilities, the needs and demands of the tourists also increase. Thereby there is an increase in the demand of wildlife souvenirs, furs skins, ivory ornaments, horns, tails, key rings made from hooves, so on and so forth. This results in the indiscriminate slaughtering of wild animals along with birds for the above said purposes.
- Water pollution resulting from improper development of sewage and solid waste disposal systems for hotels and other facilities. There has been severe pollution of river, lake and beaches from sewage outfall lines, and of ground water by seepage of waste material. Sewage disposal is also effected either through septic tanks and absorption pits or as in tourist projects, disposal of waste water through biochemical treatment plants, into inland drainage which may have detrimental effects on the fauna in areas of disposal owing to certain substances that may be contained in the disposed effluent.
- Air pollution resulting from excessive use of internal combustion vehicles (cars, taxis, buses, motorcycles, etc.) in tourism areas.
- Noise pollution generated by a concentration of tourists and tourist vehicles.
- Visual pollution resulting from poorly designed hotels and other tourist facilities, badly planned layout & facilities, inadequate landscaping of facilities, use of large and ugly advertising signs etc.
- Ecological disruption of natural areas by overuse and misuse by tourists and damage to archaeological and historic sites by overuse or misuse by tourists.

- Water supply is in most cases gained from bore holes in the ground. At the same time, in the area, absorption pits are used for disposing off effluent or percolation to the ground in areas irrigated by treated water from biochemical system, as stated at above point. The danger of polluting underground water, if such practice is intensified, is imminent.
- Garbage disposal seems to be the most acute problem contributing to soil and environmental pollution. Usually, only scanty service for collection exists and therefore every hotelier solves the problem by burying the waste in ditches. During the monsoon, when sunshine is rather poor, contamination of the adjacent area is possible.
- Thus environmental hazards and land use problems resulting from poor planning, siting and engineering of tourist attractions and facilities, could be serious.

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 exist 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.

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