Chapter 8
Socio-Economic Impact of Rural Tourism: A Study on Padmanavpur Village of Odisha

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, rural villages of India have found a place on the tourist map of the world. Not only does rural tourism provide an additional source of income to the villagers but it also helps showcase the rural life and culture of the people, such as art, crafts, and heritage, etc., of the village and community. At present, most of the states of India are facing many challenges for the implementation of rural tourism projects, which stands against achieving the objective of the project set-up by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India. Some of the problems are very grave and need immediate attention of the administration. The Department of Tourism, Govt. of Odisha, has identified eight villages in the state for implementation of the Rural Tourism project. Padmanavpur, a village in South Odisha is one of them. The author has taken this village to study the impact of rural tourism on the socio-cultural life of the local community. The chapter indicates that the village has a high potential for tourists, but due to the delay in implementation and completion of the project, the stakeholders are not getting the desired benefits.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, tourism has been received recognition as an economic development tools. This has led to various reactions in government policy and planning. Tourism is gaining increasing attraction also as a tool for the rural policy making. However, transition from rural economics to tourism, brings a great challenge for policy makers in deciding on how to plan and implement the different schemes related to rural tourism. Rural tourism project in the different villages of India have been attracting sizable number of tourist to gain experience the rural culture of local people.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Padmanavpur is a small village located in Ganjam district of Odisha. The village is divided into three parts and 104 families are living in this village. All the families belong from Weaving Profession
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and most of the family members are engaged in different weaving activities. The main product of this village is saree which popularly known as Berhampuri Saree. The product has good market in Odisha and outside. The specialties of the weaving here is that till today they are using traditional equipments for weaving for which one can feel the skill of the artisans in the weaving.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As per the definition of the UN-WTO rural tourism product is that gives to visitors personalized contacts, a taste of physical and human environment of country side and as far as possible allow them to participate in the activities traditions and life styles of local people. There are variety of terms used to describe tourism in rural areas including rural life, art culture and heritage at rural location even farm tourism, agri-tourism etc. Oppermann (1997) felt “rural tourism as that occurs in non-urban setting where human activities is present (Beeton, 2006). Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India defines “Any form of tourism that show cases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations there by benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism.” Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. In India the important role of cooperative society in promoting tourism is yet to be recognized. So tourism through community participation has yet to be popularized in a big way. Some countries are using rural tourism as a development strategy to improve the social and economic well being of rural area. Benefits of rural tourism have been expressed as employment growth and broadening a regions economic base, there is repopulation, social improvement, revitalization of local crafts etc. (Sharpley, 2000).

There is no commonly accepted definition of rural tourism. Some authors view rural tourism as a panacea for rural areas others are more skeptical. The model of Beeton (2006) explain the complex nature of rural tourism. This model indicates the relationship between tourism and rural village. The community is the central theme of the rural tourism concept which cannot be replaced.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1. To understood the potential of the study village.
2. To analyze the economic and social impact of rural tourism that have occurred in the weaving village of Padmanavapur.
3. Identify the challenges to the rural tourism development in the study village.
4. To make recommendation on the basis of the finding of the study for implementation of scheme offered by Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India.

Scope of the Study

The study is confined to examine the implementation of rural tourism scheme of Govt. of India in the weaving village of Padmanavapur. This is an exploration study which attempts to analyze the various factors that affects rural tourism in the village. Further, in general the study is measuring the socio-economic impact of rural tourism village of Odisha. Here the interest was in finding out if there are any particular areas relating to impact of rural tourism that can be given greater attention so that the employment can be generated and service satisfaction can be further developed.
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