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CONTENTS

1. A Study of Rural / Urban Customer Attitude Towards Purchase of Branded Tooth Paste : A Survey
Dr. Sumeet S. Giram 1 - 4
2. Working Capital Management- A Case Study of Devgiri Urban Co-Operative Bank Ltd. Aurangabad
Bilas S. Kale 5 - 13
3. Changing Paradigms of Marketing: Internet Marketing, Benefits and Challenges
Dr. Abhijeet Shelke and Dr. Mohammad Farooque Khan 14 - 18
4. A Few Steps to go for Career in Advertising
Mr. Rameshwar B. Jagdale 19 - 22
5. A Study of Consumer Behavior for Daily News Paper in Aurangabad City
Mr. Ashish Kailaschandra Malani 23 - 33
6. Growth Trends of Entrepreneurship Development in Marathwada Region with Special Reference to Jalna District
Mr. Krishna G. Kaldate 34 - 38
- 7. Role of Tourism in Rural Development of Maharashtra : An Overview
Mr. Sangopal Prakash Ingle 39 - 43
8. Commerce Education in India : Towards the Step of Development
Dr. Kishor L. Salve 44 - 46
9. A Study of Buyers Behaviour and Purchasing Practices of Women Customers in Shopping Malls of Aurangabad City
Mrs. Pallavi Bhalerao & Mrs. Manisha Deshpande 47 - 56

Role of Tourism in Rural Development of Maharashtra : An Overview

Mr. Sangapal Prakash Ingle

Introduction :

The world of tourism today is moving towards experiential tourism. Countries are competing for foreign tourists by offering a mix of facilities, conveniences, comforts and experiences based on their competency. India has its core competence in rural culture and heritage which is more receptive, hospitable and resourceful. It is time, India focus on developing rural tourism and follows a strategic approach towards that.

The objective is to ensure that tourism benefits every strata of rural society. India is primarily a cultural destination not only in international tourism but in domestic tourism also. Tourism is also growing as an industry in India. In recent years a phenomenal growth in tourism is observed in India; inbound as well as outbound.

Rural Tourism :

There are different forms of rural tourism have developed in different regions and hence it is hard to find characteristics that are common to all of the countries; fourthly rural areas are in a complex process of change due to the impact of global markets, communications and telecommunications that have changed market conditions and orientations for traditional products. Besides, though some rural areas have experienced depopulation there are many of them that are experiencing an inflow of people to retire or to develop new non-traditional businesses. There are some characteristics of rural tourism- natural environment, fresh food & vegetables, popularized places, rural culture & activities, locally owned enterprises, etc.

Rural Development :

Gandiji says, "We should be going to village". Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life a specific group of people in rural area. It involve extending the benefits of development the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural area. The main objective of rural development are multi directional it aim as increased employment, higher productivity, higher income, village, shelter, roads, drinking water, tourism, electricity to generate employment opportunities and the like in addition the rural to people for promoting moral social, political and culture life. It is not only create employment, creation of assets, development if social infrastructure but also with creating opportunities to people to harness their spiritual moral, social & culture life.

Objectives :

- 1) To study the role of tourism in rural development of Maharashtra.
- 2) To study of promote entrepreneurship in rural tourism.

Hypothesis :

- 1) Tourism play a vital role in employment & rural development.
- 2) Tourism promote the skills & arts of the villagers.

Research Methodology :

From the published information and statistical data from various Five Years Plans by Planning Commission of India, budget reviews, tourism policy of Government of India and Government of Maharashtra were compiled and studied. Relevant published literature, information available on the topic of study in the relevant books, articles, magazines, research papers and websites was all part of literature review.

Scope :

The scope of the study is limited to examine the benefits and role of tourism in the development of rural area of Maharashtra.

Role of tourism in rural development of Maharashtra :

Any form of tourism which highlights the rural life, arts, culture, heritage, at rural sites, thereby supporting the Hosts (local) community socially, economically as well as enabling interaction among the Guest (tourist) and the Hosts (local) for more experience & enrichment can be called as rural tourism. This type of tourism takes place in rural sites.

Maharashtra is one of the most important states of India given its size and contribution to the nation's income and wealth. Agriculture is the mainstay of the state of Maharashtra. It is the main occupation of the people. Total 308 lakh hectares land in Maharashtra. Out of that 2/3 means approximately 225.6 lakh hectares of land is under cultivation. Again out of that approximately 80 to 85% land has arable type of farming, whereas 16% area has horticultural farming. Maharashtra is a state leading in drip irrigation, 60% of India's drip irrigation system is found in Maharashtra alone. 58% of the state's population of ten crore live in the rural area & around 55% of the population is dependent upon agriculture. The Maharashtra agriculture sector accounts for 16.86 percent of Maharashtra's gross domestic product (GDP).

The proportion of total 308 lakh hectares land usage in Maharashtra

No.	Particulars	Areas (In lakh Hactares)	Percentage
1.	Net area sown	174.80	56.80
2.	Waste land	25.30	8.30
3.	Forest land	52.10	16.90
4.	Other uncultivated land	24.20	7.90
5.	Land not available for cultivation	31.30	10.10

(Source: MNS)

Proportion of Population of Maharashtra with Rural, Urban & Agriculture sector

Particular	Maharashtra	Urban	Rural
Male	5,82,43,056	2,67,04,022	3,15,39,034
Female	5,41,31,277	2,41,14,237	3,00,17,040
Total	11,23,74,333	5,08,18,259	6,15,56,074

(Source: Census 2011)

Foreign Tourist Arrivals & Foreign Exchange Earnings during the year 2000-2012

Year	Foreign Tourists Arrivals	% change over previous year	Foreign Exchange Earnings	% change over previous year
2000	26,49,378	6.7	15,626	20.6
2001	25,37,282	-4.2	15,083	-3.5
2002	23,84,364	-6.0	15,064	-0.1
2003	27,26,214	14.3	20,729	37.6
2004	34,57,477	26.0	27,944	34.8
2005	39,18,610	13.3	33,123	18.5
2006	44,47,167	13.5	39,025	17.8
2007	50,81,504	14.3	44,360	13.7
2008	52,82,603	4.0	51,294	15.6
2009	51,67,699	-2.2	53,700*	4.7
2010	57,75,692	11.8	64,889#	20.8
2011	63,09,222	9.2	77,591#	19.6
2012	64,48,318	5.4	94,487#	21.8

(Source: Annual report of tourism department 2012)

Rural tourism is the best option to peoples, farmers to generates extra incomes with their main business and promote to 'Make in India', 'Incredible India.' This rural tourism covers both domestic & foreign tourist. Tourism is now well recognized as an engine of growth in the various economies in the world. Several countries have transformed their economies by developing their tourism potential. Tourism has great capacity to generate large-scale employment and additional income sources to the skilled and unskilled.

Indians believe in holidays: The country has among the largest number of public holidays in the world. Yet the most common reason for getting away is to "visit a native place". Migrant workers return to their family farms at harvest time. Others return to their villages and extended families for an annual pilgrimage. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multifaceted and may entail farm/agriculture tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism and ecotourism. As against the conventional tourism, rural tourism has certain typical characteristics: It is experience-oriented; the locations are sparsely populated; it is predominantly in natural environments; it meshes with seasonality and local events; and it is based on the preservation of culture, heritage and traditions."

Main occupation of peoples of rural areas is farming but many people work in handicrafts, company, cottage industry, etc. The rural tourism in India is a link between the tourist & villagers. As the perceptions, attitude, is changing very fast of the present tourist communities & today's tourists are also very keen to enrich & experience about to develop the alternative strategy to promote rural tourism in domestic & as well as international market rural tourism has emerged as a new mantra for alternative

tourism development. This concept has been already tested in the developed country & proved the best results. And rural tourism success depends on markets, resources, historic background, environment, tourism products, tourist preferences, hotels facilities, the image of rural.

It remembered the old days these we lives in past, it remembered our good & bad events, romantic ideas, rural enjoyment, natural surrounding & simple life and that is different from stressful urban life, etc. These all factors can attract the tourists irrespective of its taste, perceptions & attitudes. Therefore it should make personalized contact, allow to tourist for participate in the rural activities, lifestyles, festivals, traditions, cultural activities, etc.

Govt. should promote the arts, skills of the rural persons. Because it is aid to them to generate extra income with their main occupation & raised standard of living, promote to child education, etc.

Tourist Attraction in Maharashtra :

There are some types of tourism like agro-tourism, heritage & cultural tourism, eco-tourism, etc. In Maharashtra has lot of pilgrimage destinations, hill stations, beaches, forts, caves, kumela, national park, wild life sanctuaries, shirdi, etc. now we can say Maharashtra is the capital of tourism.

In spite of all type of tourism resources & potentialities in India we are unable to fully explore the tourism products & services to attract assize able number of international tourist. Now it is the right time to identify the right market & right consumer in this era of fierce competition among the tourist generating countries. So that India can be real Incredible India as a destination in the map of world tourism. The travel & tourism in India contributes 11% to the total world GDP. It is one of the largest source of earnings. The rural tourism in India is being promoted as a joint venture of ministry of tourism and government of India. Tourism in India can play a leading role to attract foreign tourist to India.

Problems & Challenges in Rural Tourism :

Financial support & local involvement, Traditional belief that agriculture can help the people, Need of education & proper understanding, infrastructure & occupation training, Absence of supporting industry, Knowledge of marketing strategy, Quality & complexity of services, Cooperation among rural peoples, Promotion of rural tourism destination, Legislation problems, Trained tourist guide, Create entrepreneurial skills & environment, Shortage of trained manpower, Coordination & support from government, Insufficient financial support, Attitude & perception of rural people, Lack of proper physical communications & language communication, Traditional products will be replace by modern products, Lack of basic business planning skills, Rural peoples may shift from traditional occupation to tourism activity, it may effects on main occupation means farming.

Conclusion :

From the above discussion we are concluded that the tourism is one of the major components in rural development. Tourism can be developed through the backdrop of rural background and it's a way to preserve our culture. It provides additional revenue generation for the farmers at negligible investment and helps them to sustain. Tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gem, jewelers & ready-made garments. Tourism generates more jobs then any other sector for every rupee invested. It will be helpful in rural development with women empowerment, progress child education, overall social development.

Suggestions :

The government should develop confidence among peoples, make plan for rural tourism, balancing among peoples, culture & environment, promote to the farming & traditional tourist products with improving quality & safety , improve the communication skills, make coordination & cooperation among peoples with improving arts & skills of them, don't neglect to farming while doing tourist activities, generate new ideas & practices, Govt. should providing hotel management & catering education, improve education system, entrepreneurship, policy support, there is must knowledge of marketing strategy, introduce regulatory to secure social, cultural & environmental sustainability.

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