



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2016; 2(1): 159-163
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 15-11-2015
Accepted: 16-12-2015

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Sustainable rural tourism: An enabler for the trend of reverse migration in Odisha

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Abstract

In the modern era of development, tourism plays the most vital role for the exchange of ideas, culture and values throughout the world. It has got greater potential to raise the country's economic growth in terms of income generation, entrepreneurial skills and its development. Unfortunately the state like Odisha suffers from the problem of high rate of unemployment and poverty even with the presence of all growth prospects of tourism. This results in the substantial rate of inter-state migration associated with the factors such as, seasonal unemployment, lower wage rate, failure of policy initiatives, debt pressure, attraction of city life comfort and amenities. In the present research article, focus has been made on the role and importance of rural Odisha which would further pull the chain of reverse migration. Finally with the discussion of its scope, impact and barriers, the article tries to bring recognition of Odisha in the world's tourism map. The data has been collected from various secondary sources like, Odisha economic Survey, Ministry of tourism and culture, Odisha tourism Policy 2013, Directorate of economics and Statistics of Odisha. The three out of six important questions of David A. Whetten (1989) [13] from his seminal paper "What constitutes a theoretical contribution" have been met in this research article. Those questions of what, how and why have been answered by interlinking the growth of rural sustainable tourism and its contribution towards the reverse migration.

Keywords: Tourism, Rural, Reverse Migration, Odisha, Sustainable, Employment.

Introduction

The rural tourism includes, the elements like, rural art, handicrafts, culture, scenic beauty, monuments, and wildlife. The concept of sustainable rural tourism supports the drive for green tourism. It helps in enhancing developmental activities, employment opportunities, along with the care for Mother Nature. The rural sector is the key to all eco-friendly projects which are absent in the urban sector. Rurality represents all those qualities, which are missing from urban area and modern urban society (Williams, 1975). The reverse trend of migration from urban to rural areas is widely supported by the presence of natural amenities. Hence the country side is frequently symbolized as the "lost golden age", Raymond Williams (1991). The sustainable rural tourism helps to narrow down urban-rural discrepancies by enhancing the scope for reverse migration. However the real responsibility lies with the rural communities along with the regulating bodies and authorities.

Sustainable Tourism

The most appropriate definition on sustainable tourism can be taken from (WTO, 1996), which essentially says, "Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing the opportunity for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled, while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity and life support systems". In the same way Eber (1992) has rightly mentioned in his statement "if tourism is to be truly beneficial to all concerned and sustainable in the long-term, then it must be ensured that resources are not over-consumed". It would further ensure that both natural and human environments are protected. It too can bring about local people participation in tourism planning and implementation, so that both rural community and their culture would get proper respect.

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The Trend of Reverse Migration

An uneven spread of industrialization and economic modernization result in wage differentials among rural and urban sectors. People of rural sector adopts the trend of rural to urban migration with the hope of getting betterment of life. The lack of non-farm employment and poor agricultural production has brought about a growth of seasonal migration (Rogaly *et al.*, 2002) [14]. The act of migration has brought about changes but at the cost of negative socio-economic impacts. It has raised slums, higher unemployment rate, more environmental hazards, pollution, worse living conditions, more mental stress, human frustrations, and more undesirable consequences. Migration reduces the number of the young, able-bodied, and the relatively better educated people in the villages. The loneliness, isolation and loss of economic support for aging parents are some of the negative impacts of rural out-migration. A continuous movement of this category of people from rural to urban may cause inequality in the quality of efficiency, which may eventually hamper rural development. It appears that the policy of stopping out-migration and inducing reverse migration becomes equivalent to the policy of poverty alleviation through the creation of employment and income generating activities in the rural areas, Ayubur Rahman Bhuyan *et al.* (2001) [3]. With regard to the structural adjustment policies, the rising trend of urban poverty and distress have triggered the drift of reverse migration. Globalization as a process has created a linkages between small towns and rural areas are called as metropolization of world economy .Number of policy implications have been formed for strengthening the urban and rural linkages. As of the 20th century, the urbanization is not simply the growth of populations living within legal-administrative boundaries of towns and cities. It rather transforms both urban and rural lifestyles. Factors like technological improvements, transport facilities, telecommunication, and Information technology have made people in rural villages urbanized without necessarily migrating to towns and cities. Thus access to modern infrastructure and services have made them less dependent on urban sector for meeting their economic and social needs.

Objectives

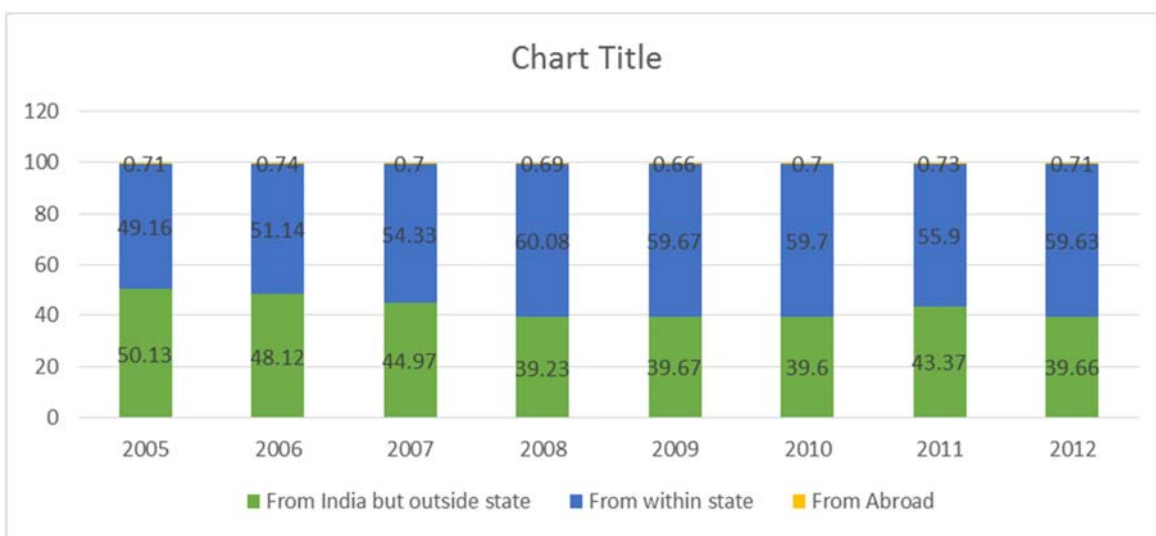
Followings are the main objectives of present research article,

1. To identify the role and importance of the sustainable rural tourism in enhancing the trend of reverse migration in rural Odisha.
2. To identify various cultural, social, economic, ecological, and health impacts of sustainable rural tourism
3. To suggest some of the appropriate measures for the growth of sustainable rural tourism being an enabler for the reverse trend of migration (urban-rural) in Odisha.

Role and Importance

In India, tourism is considered as the fastest growing industry and it has attracted 6.85 million international tourists all over world. It has got \$18.4 billion foreign exchange earnings from tourism receipts in 2013-14. It also contributes 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. Almost 20 million people are now working in the India’s tourism industry. Odisha is located in the eastern region of India. The state can be split into four natural regions namely, hilly areas in the north and northwest, the Eastern Ghats, the central and the western plateau and the coastal plains. In most of the cases the tourists from within state contributes for major composition for tourists in Odisha. Mostly the tourists from outside the state come from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. India is one of the fastest emerging countries of the world so far the tourism is concerned. Countries like France, German, UK, USA, are the major contributors for the trend of composition of tourists from abroad. The ‘Incredible India Campaign’ has attracted worldwide attention for the growth of tourism. Unfortunately Odisha despite having a strong varied natural attractions, cultural, and religious heritage, possess a comparatively smaller role in the World Tourism (Odisha Tourism Policy 2013) [13].

Following figure shows the absolute number of tourists from within the state, outside the state and from abroad.



Source- Odish Economic Survey-2013-14

The above figure depicts that the number of foreign tourists are quite low which is even less than 1%. The number of tourists from outside state has been falling till 2008 then

there is found the rising trend .The total number of tourists within state seems to constitute more than 50%.

The role and importance of sustainable tourism can be broadly discussed in the following points.

1-Scope of employment and entrepreneurship

The sustainable rural tourism can be regarded as an opportunity to bring forth the developmental tasks for rural India. It can actually add towards the economic growth. However relatively high income from non-farm sector can further induce some talented return migrants to establish their entrepreneurship. This in turn circumvents the financial constraints among rural people, Jialu Liu, (2011). Thus rural tourism can go a long way to cater developmental projects for the rural economy.

2-Eco-friendly living

The rural sector is considered as the most appropriate place for leading an eco-friendly living. People would get themselves away from pollutant impact of industries and plants. This in turn helps to develop eco-tourism spots. Leading a life in the rural sector is considered to be more relaxing in comparison to urban life. As per Raymond Williams (1975), village life can be regarded as the powerful evocation of a way of life that contracts from the utilitarian and materialistic values of urban life.

3- Growth of infrastructure

Indian rural sector is extensively manifested for the small and cottage industries. Rural arts and handicrafts play the most vital role in displaying the culture and heritage of India. As per Bill Bramwell (1994) the rural sector is manifested for the inherent variety of landscape, habitant and human heritage. In Odisha we can find the world famous handmade crafts of Chandua work of pipili, pata chitra of Raghurajpur and handloom work of Sambalpur, silver filigree work of Cuttack. Also the village temples and old sculptures can be taken as the basis of tourism development. Similarly different festivals, traditions and monuments can attract the tourists from the entire world. All these bring massive investment for infrastructure. Odisha has a well-developed infrastructural projects to promote tourism growth. The state's infrastructure comprises of good roads, railway networks, airports, ports, power, and telecom. As of latest report, the state government declared plans to invest US\$ 5,806 million for the development of road infrastructure in the state. Odisha's tourism sector is likely to get support from International Finance Corporation (IFC), the lending arm of World Bank. It would further attract enormous tourists' footfall for Odisha.

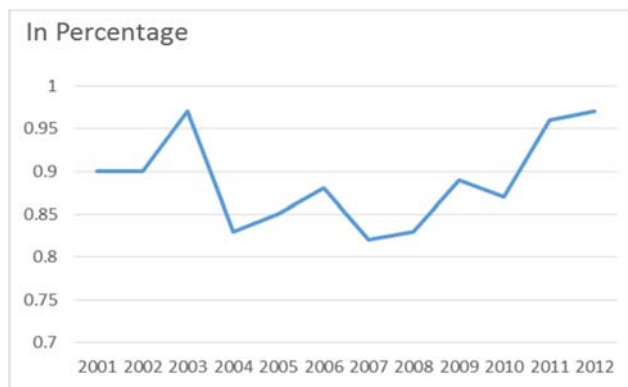
4-Health benefits.

It has been rightly said, "The quality of countryside life is deeply felt", Harrison (1991). The countryside life is considered as the best suited place for both spiritual and intellectual upliftment. In the today's materialistic world, people fail to maintain the peace and tranquillity of mind. We can find people coming to rural areas to get evolved for the spiritual entity. We can find people spending their retirement life to seek the calming effect of nature. With the

rapid growth of urbanization, the ecosystem get spoiled with the carbon dioxide and other pollutant emissions. Every year the tourists' attraction has been found for herbal and other health benefits of nature. In other words rural tourism boosts refreshment and refinement for urban exhausted life.

5-Global Integration

The rural tourism can bring the actual scope for sharing the inherent socio- cultural values of different nations. It can blend the international bond through different thoughts, ideas and visions. Today in the world of globalization, we can find the interdependency of economic and cultural activities. This term got its popularity for the first time in the issue of Harvard Business review globalization of markets" Theodore Levitt (1983). However with the proper policy implementation, the scope of rural culture and heritage can be reached in the global sphere.

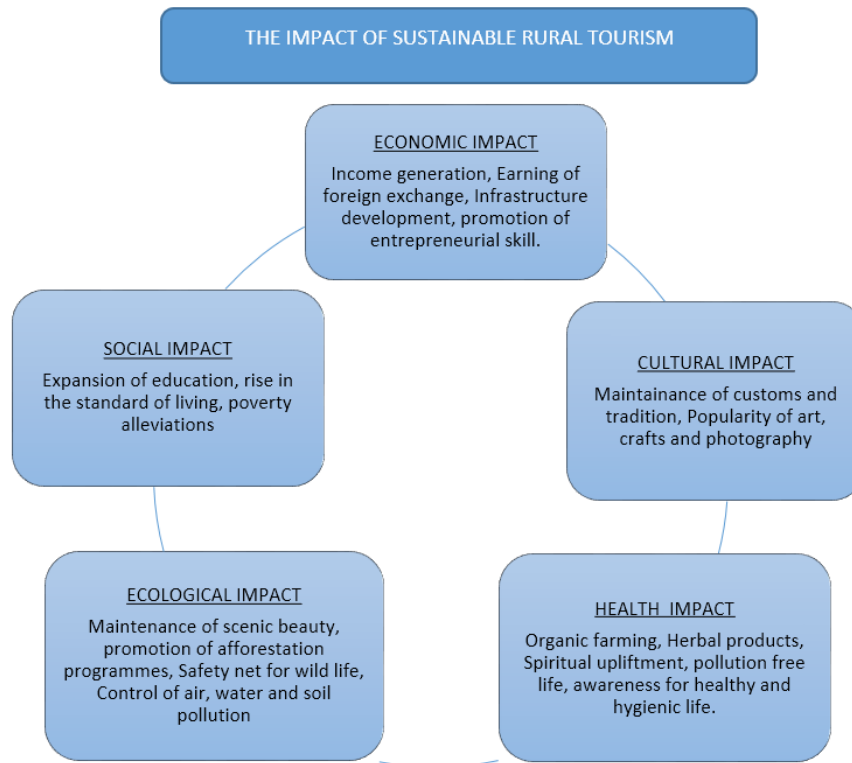


Source- Odish Economic Survey-2013-14

It has been observed that Odisha tends to have less than 1% share of foreign tourists arrival in India. Still it seems to be rising from 0.82 % to 0.97% from the year 2007 to 2012 respectively.

As per the census 2011, the slowdown in the growth rate of overall population is significantly lower which decreased from 21.5% (2001) to 17.6% (2011). The substantial decline in the population is found in the rural areas from 18.1% (2001) to 12.2% (2011) respectively. On the other hand in urban areas, there is found a marginal increase of population from 3.15 % (2001) to 3.18% (2011) respectively. Internal migration is considered as the major factor responsible for this situation. People shift from their native rural area to the comparatively affluent area for the attainment of better standard of living, even though they are ready to engage themselves in various activities. However due to failure of policies, schemes and absence of employment opportunities, people migrate to the urban sector. Thus growth of sustainable tourism would have tremendous impact on motivating people to return to their own native villages.

The positive impact of sustainable tourism has been highlighted with following chart. It has been broadly classified under five heads namely, social impact, economic impact, cultural impact, ecological impact, and health impact.



Suggestive Measures to Boost Sustainable Rural Tourism Being an Enabler of Reverse Migration

The rural tourism occupies the central theme for overall growth and development of the economy. In this context we can suggest following measures to enhance the sustainable rural tourism.

- 1 There should be adequate fund allocation for the promotion of rural tourism. An adequate amount of infrastructural facilities like road connectivity, construction of hotels, guest house and other accommodation facilities should be provided. Government has incorporate all these developmental activities by maintaining ecological balance.
- 2 There should be active participation of village community for helping the tourists with good behaviour, hospitality and knowledge. The community participation has got the significant contribution towards tourism, Black Stock (2006) ^[17]. A proper policy framework, technological innovation, institution based policies, innovative ideas by the analysts, researchers and academicians have to be taken into out for the growth of tourism.
- 3 An appropriate policy measures need to be introduced where the ecosystem can be protected. Different environment regulatory approaches need to be taken into account for environmental issues. Various agencies such as IIPC (integrated pollution Control and Board), ECT (Environment and clean technology), and EPA (Environment protection Agency) are responsible for the conservation of environment. The philosophy of sustainable rural tourism can be made successful by encouraging afforestation, eco-friendly projects and various entrepreneurial work, Nathan K. Austina (2003). In other words eco-tourism has got all potentialities to pull the chain of reverse migration.
- 4 Skill development among rural people can go a long way in bringing the trend of reverse migration successful.

Indian innovators both large and small have their own targets for rural market as a destination. India is able to achieve long run economic growth by unleashing and harnessing the creativity of its grassroots entrepreneurs, especially in rural areas, (Navi Radjou, 2009). The small scale manufacturing units in villages have to be established so that the villagers could be absorbed in their own native places. It would be good to have several small scale manufacturing units in villages and also have training centres for the youth so that they could be absorbed in the village itself, otherwise, the youth will move to the cities resulting in rising trend of unskilled labour and unproductivity of the sector, Jayashree Sengupta, (2013).

- 5 In order to achieve the global development, priorities should be made for an integration of Science and technology (S&T) and with the Research and development (R&D). Introduction of technology and various developmental projects are key to build the capacity building activity in rural farm and non-farm sectors. As per the Millennium Development Goals of bank the investment in rural sector would help rural producers to have large share of the gain and productivity. It would further help to reduce poverty, to attain the trend of reverse migration.
- 6 Private sector participation can be highly encouraged to deal with the growth prospects of tourism. The Government of Odisha has taken several steps for the promotion of tourism through private sector participation. The tourism policy has been formulated by the Government for encouraging private investors. As per the central Government policy the tourism industries are eligible for the automatic approval of foreign technological agreements and for 51 percent foreign equity holdings, subject to certain norms, where NRIs (non-resident Indians) are permitted to hold up to 100% equity(Department of tourism, Odisha).

Conclusion

Over the decades the tourism has got greater potential in generating growth and employment opportunities for both rural and urban sectors. Government is taking various steps and policy decisions to bring sustainable growth of tourism. Currently tourism is increasingly seen as a relevant tool for addressing rural problems in developing countries, Jarkko Saarinen and Monkoggi Lenao (2014) ^[10]. Odisha tourism policy 2013 ^[13] has made an aggressive and proactive approach towards the success of this sector. Those includes, policy initiatives, fund support, professional management input and through institutional arrangement. The tourism policy has too attached the priorities for human resource development, measures to ensure security of tourists and other developmental projects. Thus rural tourism can be taken as an important key for making rural sector sustainable and the trend of reverse migration (urban-rural) highly achievable.

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