



A study on Problems of Rural Tourism Service Providers in Selected Rural Tourism Destinations in Karnataka, India

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Abstract: Rural tourism is one of the major revenue generation model for rural places in Karnataka. Rural people using tourism as additional revenue generation model along with their main agricultural activities. Now it there is a huge demand from tourists to visit rural tourism destination during weekends and holidays. But the demand also creates lots of problems to rural tourism service providers.

Keywords: Rural, Rural Tourism, Tourism Destinations and Services Providers

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a multi-billion dollar industry. An ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development.

Tourism is a growing industry in India, with people from all over the world traveling there to experience the country's natural beauty and visit its vast array of states and their differing cultures and climates. Many are also attracted by India's famous landmarks such as the Taj Mahal and Khajuraho Temples. The largest number foreign tourist arrivals are usually seen in December and January during the cooler winter months when temperatures are more bearable. Indian tourism sector is to grow at an annual average growth rate of 7 per cent over the next ten years. Over 7.1 million foreign tourist arrived in 2015. By 2025, foreign tourist arrivals in India are expected to reach 15.3 million, according to the World Tourism Organization. The Indian tourism and hospitality industry contributed nearly US\$ 187.9 billion or 12.5 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2015.

Karnataka, in the South West of India is a prominent tourism hub, attracting tourists from across the world. Karnataka tourism has seen a boost owing to its capital, Bangalore emerging as the IT centre of the country. The flourish in tourism has triggered the mushrooming of resorts and home-stays across the state facilitating a better travel experience. Malenadu (Malnad) is a region in the state of Karnataka in India. Malenadu covers the western and eastern slopes of the Western Ghats or Sahyadri mountain range, and is roughly

100 kilometers in width. It is situated between Coastal Karnataka and Bayaluseeme regions of Karnataka. The word Malenadu is derived from male meaning hill and nādu meaning land; another etymology being "male" meaning rain and "nadu" meaning "land" translating it to "Land of Rain". Malnad is a combo package consisting mountains, forests, plantations, waterfalls and not the least good hospitality services. Malnad is a vast expanse spread on the western and eastern sides of Western Ghats belt in Karnataka.

Rural Tourism is any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby, benefiting the local community economically and socially, as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the local community for a more enriching tourism experience.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Mili, 2012) has reported that, rural tourism is a recent offshoot of tourism sector that has grown up to be a potential business in its own space. Rural tourism is a form of nature based tourism that uncovers the rural life, culture, art and heritage at rural locations, thereby favoring the local communities socially and economically. Such form of tourism has created tremendous impact on the local economy and socio-cultural scenario of the concern area on one hand and carries a potential scope for the rural residents on the other hand.

(Rathore, 2012) has observed that, rural tourism will emerge as an important instrument for sustainable human development including poverty alleviation, employment generation, environmental regeneration and development of remote areas and advancement of women and other disadvantaged groups in the country apart from promoting social integration and international understanding. It can help inflow to resources from urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban. Both short-term and long-term planning, implementing and monitoring are vital in avoiding damage to rural areas. Environmental management, local involvement, sound legislation, sustainable marketing, and realistic planning are crucial for development of rural tourism. The government should promote rural tourism to ensure sustainable economic development and positive social change.

(Ramakumar & Shinde, 2008) have reported that, developed countries with large agricultural economies forayed into this area mainly because it offers tourists an opportunity to enrich their lives with nature and adventure and at the same time instill pride among farmers along with the benefit of extra income. Countries that are in the forefront of rural tourism include Australia, New Zealand, Holland, UK, Germany, Switzerland, France, Spain, Argentina, Chile, Canada and the United States. Rural tourism is gaining importance in Indian tourism with its economic and social benefits. It is estimated that Rs.4, 300 crore additional revenue can be generated through Rural tourism. It is going to play a vital role in bridging the gap between Rural and Urban India by balancing urbanization and counter urbanization syndromes.

(Sharma & Vyas, 2013) have highlighted Rural entrepreneurship is one of the newest areas of research in the entrepreneurship field. It has become one of the significant supportive factors for rural economic development and agribusiness. This dissertation is concerned with the distinctive challenges and opportunities of developing entrepreneurship in rural locations, and also provides the necessary suggestions that can be used in this context. This article defines rural entrepreneurship, integrates the current rural entrepreneurship discusses the constraints

of potential rural entrepreneurs and development inputs and pitfalls in managing a rural enterprise and other related

(Ramakumar & Shinde, 2008) have observed that the major challenge is preservation of the environment and natural resources. There are other challenges to deal such as, proper education, need to generate a democratic movement which helps people at all levels to participate in tourism development. Occupation training, handicraft promotion, and improvement in the basic infrastructure are very much necessary to boost the villagers' quality of life and rural tourism.

(Gopal, Varma, & Gopinathan, 2008) have highlighted Development of agri-tourism in rural areas is still in its nascent stage. Rural India has perfect opportunities to enhance its agri-tourism offer and it also represents one of the few states, which unifies different climates, natural characteristics and socio-cultural entities. Though there has not been much initiative by the state government for agri-tourism development, it has been successfully initiated through the farmers' efforts. For the Agri tourism to succeed, it is imperative that the tourists must have:

1. Something to see: Animals, birds, farms, culture of the village, dress and festivals.
2. Something to do: Participating in agricultural operations, riding camel, buffalo, cooking and participating in the rural games.
3. Something to buy: Rural crafts, dress materials, farm gate fresh processed food are few items.

Randelli et al. (2012), the rural tourism imposes changes in each area. Initially, these changes occur at the micro level, and only in the next stage, the changes occur on macro level in rural regime. The success of rural tourism development by changing the rural regime depends on how successfully the rural tourism is developing in rural areas and what benefits it provides for the local residents. The macro level or landscape include factors influencing innovation or a shift in a new phase of economic growth, changes in cultural and normative values, environmental issues, food prices, and the quality of food and other factors. If the development of rural regime includes rules and restrictions in rural communities, the landscape includes more factors that are external. Landscape context varies with the development of rural tourism, but it is more difficult to change landscape than the rural regime.

(Kheiri & Nasihatkon, 2016), have observed in their study, the findings also demonstrated that the development of rural tourism has an impact on sustainable livelihood assets. For developing rural tourism, the main attractions must be maintained and kept in good condition. Nature, customs and rituals of local people must stay unharmed from possible damages that tourism might bring to them. Also, old houses and places that could be considered as an attraction must be under protection.

(Lo, Ramayah, Lee, & Hui, 2014) their study has provided compelling evidence on the importance of continuous efforts to understand the nature of rural tourism destinations from the perception of local communities. It is worth examining the impact tourism could have on local communities in view of the fact that identifying and developing sustainable rural

tourism continues to be important in tourism industry. This research study claims to demonstrate the existence of a positive and significant link between two types of environmental factors namely, conservation of culture heritage and influence of resources on communities' attitudes towards tourism development. Hence, it is crucial to understand the various concerns of the local communities to ensure a better sustainability performance especially in rural tourism setting.

(Kumar & Rao, 2014) in their report opened rural tourism has been advocated to showcase the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, to benefit the local community, economically and socially. It also enables interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching & rewarding tourism experience. Rural tourism is essentially an activity which takes place in the countryside. It is multi-faceted and may entail farm/agricultural tourism, cultural tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, and eco-tourism. Rural tourism has certain typical characteristics like; it is experience-oriented, the locations are sparsely populated, it is predominantly in natural environment, it meshes with seasonality and local events, and is based on preservation of culture,

(Nagy, Nagy, & Káposzta, 2016) have observed that tourism has always been present in the policies but somehow as a secondary priority. According to some experts and strategies, it is only one sector in the economy, while others say that it should be dealt with as an individual, gradually increasing activity in the economy. It is because Hungary has favorable conditions for various types of tourism. Still, it must not be forgotten that tourism requires high quality resources (not only regarding the natural endowments, but e.g. the human resource and the quality and availability of services).

3. Research Methodology

Rural Tourism

Any form of tourism that showcases the rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience can be termed as rural tourism.

Rural and Urban Definition

Census 2011 Classified urban area as town with regard to classification of urban and rural areas. In the Census of India 2011, the definition of Urban area adopted is as follows:

- I. All statutory places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee, etc.
- II. A place satisfying the following three criteria simultaneously:
 - a) A minimum population of 5,000;
 - b) At least 75 per cent of male working population engaged in non-agricultural pursuits; and
 - c) A density of population of at least 400 per sq. km. (1,000 per sq. mile).

According to Census 2011, an area is considered 'Rural' if it is not classified as 'Urban' as per the above definition

Tourism Service Provider

World Travel and Tourism Council defines Tourism service provider as a person or company who ultimately provides the service to the customers.

Rural Tourism Service Provider

World Travel and Tourism Council defines rural tourism service provider as a person or company who ultimately provides the service to the customers who seeks the services of rural tourism. Subir Gosh in their book Rural Tourism mentioned that in India majority of rural tourism establishments like, home stay, Resort, farm house, vacation cottages and community owned accommodations themselves taking care of accommodation, B&B, booking ,local transportation , camping sites, destination marketing organisations, guidance. Hence, For this research researcher considered above said person or company as rural tourism service provider. In further part of research service provider means rural tourism service provider.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to understand the problems and prospects of rural tourism form tourist and service provider print of view in Malnad region of Karnataka state.

The proposed research has the following objectives:

1. To assess various problems faced by rural tourism service provider in Malnad region of Karnataka state.
2. To assess the prospects of rural tourism in Malnad region for service provider point of view.
3. To suggest strategies for promotion of Malnad region as a major rural tourism destination.

5. HYPOTHESIS FORMULATION

The study seeks to clarify several assumptions that revolve around the central theme of the study, i.e., **A study on Problems of Rural Tourism Service Providers in Selected Rural Tourism Destinations in Karnataka, India.** The hypotheses were formulated in synchronization with the purpose and objectives of the study. The following sets of hypothesis have been formulated for the purpose of the study.

1. Service providers providing facilities for rural tourism experience varied types of problems with respect to initial, feasibility , financial, economic, socio-cultural, environmental., seasonality, resource availability, legal and government and regulation problems.
2. The prospects for rural tourism are high as perceived by service providers with respect to economic, environmental, socio-cultural and technological prospects.
3. Service providers differ in their opinion on mode of promotion for rural tourism.
4. Tourists and service providers differ in their opinion on problems, prospects and promotion of rural tourism.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 6.1 Overall Problems –One Sample t Test- Service Providers - Results of One Sample t-Tests, (Standard Fixed 60).

Sl No	Overall Problems	Mean	S.d	Diff from the std	t value	P value
1	Initial Problems	30.22	4.20	-29.78	-89.786	.000
2	Feasibility Problems	74.63	13.52	14.63	13.682	.000
3	Financial Problems	74.81	16.58	14.81	11.296	.000
4	Economic Problems	75.15	13.91	15.15	13.777	.000
5	Socio-cultural Problems	47.90	5.28	-12.10	-28.980	.000
6	Environmental Problems	54.23	6.98	-5.77	-10.453	.000
7	Seasonality Problems	78.00	9.91	18.00	22.971	.000
8	Resource Availability Problems	67.38	6.24	7.38	14.945	.000
9	Legal Problems	83.63	6.50	23.63	45.989	.000
10	Govt. Rules and Regulation Problems	87.13	9.35	27.13	36.704	.000

(Source: Primary Data) Note: Standard expected 60; N=160; df=159

1. Initial problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of initial problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=-89.786$; $p=.000$) lower (mean 30.22%) than the expected.

2. Feasibility Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of feasibility Problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=13.682$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 74.63%) than the expected.

3. Financial Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of financial problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=11.296$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 74.81%) than the expected.

4. Economic Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of economic problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=13.777$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 75.15%) than the expected.

5. Socio-cultural Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of socio-cultural problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t= - 28.980$; $p=.000$) lower (mean 47.90%) than the expected.

6. Environmental Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of environmental Problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=-10.453$; $p=.000$) lower (mean 54.23%) than the expected.

7. Seasonality Problem: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of seasonality problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=22.971$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 78.00%) than the expected.

8. Resource Availability Problem: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of resource availability problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=14.945$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 67.38%) than the expected.

9. Legal Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of legal problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=45.989$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 83.63%) than the expected.

10. Govt. Rules and Regulation Problems: When one sample t test was applied to find out the extent of government rules and regulation problems faces, it revealed a significant difference with the standard value (60%) having significantly ($t=36.704$; $p=.000$) higher (mean 87.13%) than the expected.

Table 6.2 Overall Problems –Rank- Service Provider

Sl No	Problems	Mean	Rank
1	Initial Problems	30.22	10
2	Feasibility Problems	74.63	6
3	Financial Problems	74.81	5
4	Economic Problems	75.15	4
5	Socio Cultural Problems	47.9	9
6	Environmental Problems	54.23	8
7	Seasonality Problems	78.00	3
8	Resource Availability Problems	67.38	7
9	Legal Problems	83.63	2
10	Govt. Rules and Regulation Problems	87.13	1

(Source: Primary Data)

From the TABLE 6.2 it is indicated that out of 10 problems identified for the purpose of analysing overall problems faced by service providers, government rules and regulation related problem is occupied at topmost priority with the mean value of (87.13%), followed by legal related problem with the mean value of (83.63%). Further it can be analysed that the seasonality problem is considered as major hurdle for service provider with the mean value of (78.00%) , economic problems, financial problems, feasibility problems and resource availability problems, respectively occupied further position with the mean values of (75.15%), (74.81%), (74.63%), (67.38%), (54.23%), socio-cultural problems are not considered as a major constraints by the service provider which occupied before last position with the mean value of 47.90% . At last initial problems are considered as least hurdle by service provider with the mean value of (30.22%).

7. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Out of ten problems are analysed for the purpose of study. It is observed that Government rules and regulation problems (Mean value of 87 per cent) are occupied topmost priority, followed by legal problems (Mean value of 84 per cent), seasonality problems (Mean value of 78 per cent), economic problems (Mean value of 75 per cent), financial problems (Mean value of 75 per cent), feasibility problems (Mean value of 74 per cent), resource problems (Mean value of 67 per cent). Environmental problems (Mean value of 54 per cent) , Socio-cultural problems (Mean value of 48 per cent) and Initial Problems (Mean Value of 30 per cent) are least preferred problems by the service providers in rural tourism destinations of Malnad region of Karnataka state.

Certainly, there is evidence to support the claim that, as a vehicle of economic growth and diversification, rural tourism can make an important contribution to rural incomes both at the level of the tourism service providers and more widely in the local economy.

However, the present work, first of its kind, is expected to fill the vacuum and provide some amount of academic and utilitarian value. The findings and suggestions of the study would also be useful in formulating effective plans and programme for sound development of the tourism in the Malnad region of Karnataka state.