

# A STUDY OF INDIA'S RURAL TOURISM BY MEANS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

Globally, the tourism sector is now recognised as one of the major engines of industrialization and growth, accounting for 14% of world GDP and being one of the largest international sectors with the largest share of foreign exchange earnings. According to the World Tourism Organisation, by 2030, the world will have 1.9 billion tourists, or 23% of the world's population. The World Tourism Organisation also predicts that the next five to 10 years will see a dramatic increase in the variety available to travellers seeking an authentic rural experience. In most rural areas of India, rural tourism is seen as an emerging strategy for preserving cultural heritage and achieving sustainable development. The Indian rural tourism industry aims to preserve the culture of rural India, create jobs, address issues of poverty, and help local communities live sustainably by enhancing growing local economies through tradition and the revival of arts and crafts. This article aims to highlight the potential of rural tourism in India. Measures such as improved awareness, business partnerships, historical and cultural education, and increased accessibility can be used to realise the potential of rural tourism, which in turn can provide local communities with an improved

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## **Introduction**

India welcomes visitors from all over the world who diapersonalize themselves with its spiritual history, natural allure, cultural wealth, varying landforms, and diverse cultural heritage. India, the land of great diversity, has a whole spectrum of interesting and meaningful tourist places for one to explore. Nowadays, over 8.87% of the Indians` jobs and 7.23% of the country`s GDP have been created by tourism, which has turned out to be one of the basic drivers of the country`s economy. The tourist industry will have enormous potential for foreign exchange earnings for India as it continues to grow. The Indian government's governing body has launched many different legal strategies in order to officiate tourism and match the tremendous expansion of international travel and tourism. Promoting India as a top travel destination, increasing the

attention of international tourists, and creating new tour products. The rapid growth of the global tourism industry is one of the fastest-developing industries, with both local and international visit counts skyrocketing in recent years, especially after 2000, the boom year. Yet, tourism movements have been no more whimsical than economist J. Michael Finger's observation that "tourism looked like a random walk, if it were a defined walk at all" (Finger, 1971: 1). Nevertheless, global international visitor visits have developed at a steady pace, from 26 million in 1952 to 282 million in 1988. By the end of 2013, the number had peaked at 1,089 million, which represents a 6% percentage increase from its initial figure. For South Asia, the rise of foreign visitors has been far faster than for the rest of the world.

In 2016, a remarkable increase in the number of foreign tourists was 15.8 million, and as for its compound annual growth rate (CAGR), it reached 8.4%. Respectively, sources show UNWTO (2018). Through time, the Indian tourism experience has been in parallel, with each area adding something different to spice it up as it grows. In India, the number of foreign tourists coming to India in 2016 was seen as a 10.6% increase compared to the global yellow medium/medium average rate of 4.7% growth in international tourist arrivals. Putting it in FTAs in 2015 was 72.68 lakh, and in 2016 it was 82.03 lakh. Even though a knowledge economy is taking the lead from agricultural Indian economics, some of its traditions are still kept alive by villages. Illustrated by recent globalisation and advanced development, India is still a developing rural country. Pathways of Indian villages that are full of local traditions and "real India" dwellers lead our country's development. Rural India, the untouched and natural gem of India's countryside, presents an array of unique traditions based on art, crafts, culture, and natural heritage. For the last three decades, in the sphere of tourism, our country has shown chest growth, though all the time, rural tourism was not considered a priority. The villages of India have numerous hidden treasures that have waited to be discovered. A true feature of the country is the rich heritage of artistic and creative indigenous peoples in the rural parts of India that could become major tourist hubs. Rural tourism will be successful if it is properly promoted. People who have an interest in learning about the traditional culture, crafts, and art of rural India will come to visit these areas rather than the urban places of India. The method is not impossible to execute. Over the years, numerous lakhs of foreign visitors have thronged the rural regions of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and South India. Unlike fancy places, these rural areas do not have any marketing efforts for rural tourism. The fact that this already works to open eyes to the prospect of rural tourism shows that the venture is very viable. To address the same two goals, the government has to endorse local tourism.

### **Rural Tourism System in India**

The very concept of "rural tourism" implies the knowledge of guests about how people of other cultures and traditions live. The conventional understanding here is that rural tourism equals cultural exchange. The idiosyncrasies of the cultural ties of foreign and indigenous folks reveal the passion of rural tourism. It can be regarded as a kind of tourism that primarily attracts rural

residents and is quite different in nature from ordinary tourism, which, of course, targets urban residents. There has been literature, but it is often lacking a solid consensus on rural tourism definition. Some great scholars, such as Seaton et al. (1994), Pearce (1989), and Bramwell (1994), have engaged on the subject, but no interpretation has been reached. Because of differing cultural norms, nature, and surrounding scenery, villages are excitingly the same for local or far-away people to make their tours. For instance, rural tourism has to be so massively promoted nowadays that it's only to be expected that such areas are going to be designated as rural tourism regions. It's not that it is not even possible to make this plan. Foreign visitors are yearly found by millions coming to places that look like Rajasthan, Gujarat, and southern India just because of promotional efforts for rural tourism. Such evidence issues alone show the practicability of rural tourism as an idea. For mutually advantageous avenues of social growth and environmentally friendly economic growth, the government should create the basis for rural tourism. Countries' criteria vary significantly; secondly, not all the types of tourism taking place in a rural location are considered to be "rural," the main purpose of which is to build an urban destination in a rural area; thirdly, various types of tourism have emerged in different regions, which makes it extremely difficult to identify what they have in common; and fourthly, rural areas are definitely suffering from the effects of the global arena.

"An attitude and skills as well, based on activities, locations, and all quantitatively measurable criteria" (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997) is a very wide definition of it. Researchers have perpetually added to the store of information about the active ontologies of rural tourism as time goes by. The list consists of the fact that the major themes of rural living, folklore, national traditions, faith, and customs, as well as interests in agriculture, nature, adventure, health, education, arts, and heritage, are some of the attractions. (MacDonald & Pedford in Jolliffe, 2003) On the other hand, the list has other themes, such as what holds a nation together as well as interests. The following criteria are essential to defining rural tourism: Also, it should be located in unspoiled areas, function as a rural village, be based only on supplies and activities limited to basic rural features (rural in scale) formed by local governance, and be individual, not uniform, to reflect the complexity and diversity of rural conditions. Expressing one's roots of culture would be the main point, so tourism would be called the local or country one when referring to the product. All types of tourism that are being conducted in rural areas and close to nature, such as rurally themed areas, cultural ideas, art forms, and historical views, and also bring benefits to the local society in both economic and social ways, are called rural tourism. The main thing that differentiates the products in the rural tourism industry from other hotels and restaurants is that when a customer has never left a five-star hotel or an ordinary dining venue, he or she is always pushed to stay in a rural hostel, since it provides an individualised approach, a feeling of rural life, and, whenever possible, participation in local traditions and lifestyles. Thus, areas where you have natural or cultivated environments or trees, or where particular natural, economic, and social factors, like "tradition," that bind people together, empathy, and reciprocity are embedded, would be regarded as natural tourist destinations.

We will have a unique tourism product due to the fact that it is small-scale, eco-friendly, "ethno-nationalized," or, as we would say, "green and sustainable." Such activities as those taking place in rural areas are covered by the term "rural tourism." Ecotourism, adventure travel, nature tourism, agrotourism (giving information about the agricultural processes so tourists will know how the food shows up on their plates), and cultural tourism are among its different types. Contrary to typical tourism, rural travel often has the following characteristics: Its main objective is to save customs, local habits, and culture. It becomes visual and takes place mostly in the green, natural scenery and in the company of local traditions accompanied by village festivities.

### **India's Possibility for Rural Tourism**

Filled with Indian arts, crafts, and culture, this post is one you will love, and you can decide to go there for galas, gifts, and other needs. Cutting to the chase: We are what we eat. The disappearance of the traditional notion of "rural" is indeed very rapid and very marked, basically in the industrialised world. The youth in urban areas would long for experiences of yearning to connect with their countrymen in the countryside. One can reach out to Indians and foreigners alike, and the endeavour remains unlike any for the latter. The promotion of rural tourism has a potential cognitive impact on people in the developed world who like to learn about traditional cultures, arts, crafts, and so on. So, they will be travelling to rural India to enjoy these sorts of rural experiences. To extend the benefits of tourism and its social and economic rewards to the geographically far-flung and newly discovered areas of India, the Ministry of Tourism and the Government of India have started many rural tourism schemes. Such objectives advocate for the idea of village tourism, which is the dominant outcome of tourism. Rural areas that receive non-agricultural projects are the main beneficiaries of inclusive job creation for youth and women who have been unemployed. A convergence committee headed by the district collector or magistrate is responsible for the implementation at the district level. Along with the hardware and software programmes, the organisation worked closely with some of the most important organisations and agencies to be involved in the project. The ministry of tourism is now also assisting 168 rural tourist areas that have registered their intent under this plan with regards to infrastructure. The Ministry of Tourism, with the help of the community, has actually just started endogenous projects, and these projects align with the current rural tourism initiatives being undertaken by the government. The purpose of these programmes is to cease regional cultures and craft-based tourism for a farmer-oriented development programme that primarily focuses on community development and livelihood sustainability during the 13th five-year plan.

The tourism of today's market is culture-focused and is known for authentic, locally made crafts and other cultural symbols. The rise of rural tourism is one of the primary goals of our government's rural promotion. They are trying it in their own way so as to create new job opportunities for everyone. However, the history of rural tourism in India is just as short as this activity was introduced to our country not long ago. On the contrary, in Europe and other parts of the world, parents have been sending their children to their grandmother's house or a summer

camp to get an authentic rural experience. Many destinations around the world are located on the outskirts of the countries that have an agriculture-based economy, that is, the U.S.A., Canada, Australia, and many others. Rural experience visits, culture reminiscence, farm adventures, natural tourism, indigenous ways of life, and ancient community encounters are different components of rural tourism. The verdant Himalayas of Uttar Pradesh, the rivers and backwaters of Kerala, the folk songs and dances of Orissa, the traditional Punjabi cuisine, the habitation of Karnataka as Nithyagram, the tribes of Bihar, the natural beauty of Meghalaya, the Theru koothu dances of Andhra Pradesh, and the Holi of Nandagaon The current piece of writing about India's envisaged growth arising from tourism is a reference to the WTTC's 2016 assessment of different countries throughout the globe.

- The total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP and its all other wider impacts are estimated at 8.8% per annum by 2030, which will create an INR 9,523.1 billion pertaining to 5.3%, where as near as it was INR 4,680.4 billion, or just 4.9% in 2018. Moreover, by the year 2030, a direct workforce of 42,439,000 is anticipated to be employed in tourism and travel, for a total of 6.2% of the workforce.

- To take policy one step further, it is expected that by 2030, the travel and tourism sector will support 57,480,000 jobs (9.2% of all occupations) that are directly and indirectly related to this sector. This, on its part, thus signals the industry's overall contribution. These figures illustrate how large the stream of income, recreation, and other bonuses tourism can bring us. Only after careful planning could the primary business be purposefully extended to the hinterland in order to build up and improve the locals' life standards in the region. The encouraging of other types of economic activity apart from agriculture is what the government ministries as well as other public sector entities in India are promoting, as the main source of economic relevance to the rural economy keeps on decreasing while the other sources of economic activity increase. Since the conception of powerfully potential industrialization, industry development, and the construction of structures on undeveloped land see a large opposition from the majority population, economic growth in rural regions instead breeds violence. They also proclaim that their daily lives are the ones that are vulnerable. However, instead of that, new vacancies and higher chances are being taken on both by the locals and those who opt for new jobs. With an excellent record of success from being in the agricultural sector, India's rural tourism industry is still not well developed, but it will increase great prospects for people's livelihoods in the future. There are business ventures designed to cater to whatever need and desire humans can dream of. More than one nation has made an analogy, and it has been figured out as a sustainable source of income and jobs for rural development. It may be employed to generate a long-term sustainable development strategy because tourism is a lucrative industry.

As for India, where 72 million people live in small towns, which is about 73% of the country's population, it is thoroughly important to build the right notions concerning rural tourism. Urban dominance is both a proud characteristic and an inherent economic development tendency in the globalisation process. Because of the above reasons, "counter urbanization," a way of living outside the city, has come up. In fact, as a consequence, the number of interested people in the



resettlement programmes in rural areas is growing. On the other side, this import of urbanisation has driven a reduction in average incomes and poor service provision, consequently generating an urbanisation syndrome in rural communities. According to the impact of urbanisation on the environment, there are not many possible ways to bridge the gap between the issues raised, and only a venture into rural tourism may probably act as a remedy. Furthermore, on the list of changes, their growing importance is affecting historical and cultural awareness, while geographical, informational, and environmental accessibility are all coming to the foreground of people's minds.

There are thirteen components to rural tourism that might draw visitors to remote areas: There are thirteen components to rural tourism that might draw visitors to remote areas:

- To name a few things:
- clean, fresh air;
- handmade nummunuments and monuments;
- language;
- art and music such as concerts, folk music and dances, painting, and sculpture;
- history of the area, including its monuments and other visual signs;
- architectural beauty specific to the area;
- gastronomy akin to the area;
- educational systems;
- certain jobs and a particular technology

### **An Overview of the Economic, Social, and Cultural Influences of Rural Tourism**

Travel is a social and cultural experience for travellers and hosts alike. It also contributes to a renewed interest and sense of pride in the customs, culture, and values of the local people. Due to the dominant culture and monolithic influence of mainstream media, local customs are often outdated. It can certainly help restore the dignity of traditional knowledge and morality. It also provides many opportunities to learn about customs, rituals, and traditions. Public displays, religious gatherings, and festivals all contribute to the symbolism of rural tourism. Many rural residents find rural tourism development very attractive due to the expected economic benefits, including employment and income growth. Most rural residents very much want tourism to develop in their area, which can significantly change the economic conditions available. Rural people can be brought into the mainstream through economic empowerment, social development, and cultural exchange. Benefits of rural tourism include increased employment opportunities, especially for youth living in rural areas, increased income, an inflow of foreign investment, increased demand for new goods and services, improved public services, government income, modernising agriculture, and other rural activities. Rural life, improving education and health, and raising living standards.

### **Rural transportation and environmental initiatives**

The concept of "rural tourism" has good intentions. It is a unique form of sustainable tourism that uses local resources, has little or no negative impact, and supports rural communities in terms of employment, resource efficiency, rural environment and culture preservation, community engagement, and a useful tool to introduce traditional beliefs and values. For planning and management reasons, rural tourism was conceived as a sustainable development

sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, aimed at transforming traditional places from individual to associative communities from relatively unconnected places to "global communities." development areas. This is the reason why rural tourism should be effectively used as a development strategy. According to Borja and Castells (1998), the new frontiers of urban management can prepare the city to face the challenges of global competitiveness, which means that urban management should be part of local development (p. 14). Rural tourism development can benefit people in rural and urban areas. An understanding of the rural environment, demographics, socio-cultural conditions, and political and economic conditions of an area is essential in order to establish a rural setting. Target market needs and wants and our understanding of the equality of our rural infrastructure are essential to developing comprehensive marketing strategies for rural tourism. Rural tourism will provide a broader perspective on life, bringing people of many cultures, beliefs, languages, and ways of life closer together. Besides improving infrastructure, it can promote improvements in social, cultural, and educational standards and curb rural-urban migration, so rural tourism can attract tourists by providing greater opportunities for village conditions and local food. Villages should use traditional building techniques to create modest but clean accommodations for tourists.

#### **Some of the issues facing the government include:**

shaky community engagement; communication problems; insufficient government concerns; distrust and fear of violence by the city; the primary means of doing business; lack of government regulation; disposal of property as a result of publicity and documentation; poor basic infrastructure; inadequate financial support; lack of investment in rural areas; lack of trained personnel and management skills; lack of basic education. India needs to do so urgently in formulating rural tourism policies, programmes, and policies to promote socio-economic and environmental cohesion. In terms of leisure and social leisure available to its members, rural tourists and national tourist agencies agree very well indeed. Inexpensive rural tourism, on the other hand, can impact communities and habitats—and in a positive way. Although special incentives and activities cannot stimulate activity, rural tourism remains an important need to be addressed in government policies and programs. Since rural tourism is "inherently productive," it is important to develop a mindset to handle domestic and international travel markets.

#### **Unique sales numbers (USP) in the rural tourism market**

India's rural tourism has a bright future, as direct interaction with local people who not only enjoy the region's natural beauty but also tribal culture, food, and traditions can create a unique selling point to attract tourists. Every Indian state has its own crafts, customs, and food. The marketing of rural tourism products is an intensive effort that requires targeted efforts. Our communities can greatly benefit from rural tourism if it is marketed properly. Our government should have a long-term financing project for rural development. Resources from cities can flow into rural economies with their help. It can prevent individuals from moving from rural to urban

areas. There is a need to plan, implement, and test short-term and long-term strategies to mitigate rural problems. The development of rural tourism depends on environmental management, community participation, sensible regulations, sustainable marketing, and practical planning. Many vendors are not a good way to enter rural tourism. Improving Rural Tourism Demand Creates specific strategies for each market niche.

The popularity of the countryside therefore reflects many other broader factors in tourist motivation, and the growing interest in the outdoors and the sense of countryside can be linked to how desirable rural areas are for leisure and tourism. The countryside here is strongly associated with the old-fashioned romantic notion of the "good old days," with an unspoiled natural environment, a simple lifestyle, and an impeccable blend of people, as it is what the "tourists" want, so the tourists eagerly brought urban luxury in a rural setting. No. Instead, it is necessary to create an environment to experience the rusticity. It is certain that the inclusion of this experience in rural tourism will attract travellers. Rural nature, culture, people, economic wealth, or what is attractive to visitors to experience rural tourism Attractions (including its authenticity), attractive facilities, accessible location, and cost (see value for money) are important considerations for competitive advantage. It will need to understand and compete with the parameters of the market due to a combination of unique selling propositions (USPs) and competitive advantages. Above all, it is the selling of the "experience" that drives sales in the rural tourism market.

**The role of the government in promoting rural tourism is as follows:**

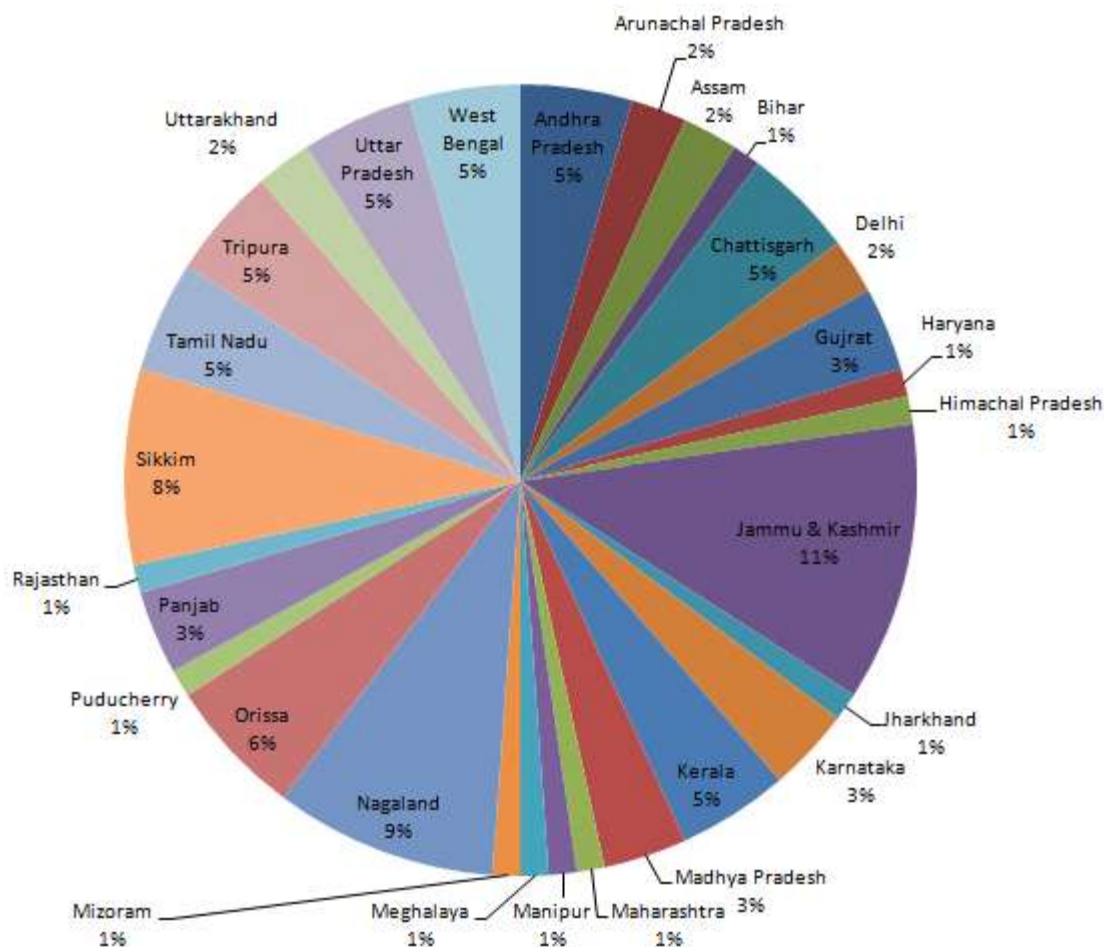
Rural tourism was not prioritised until 2002. In an effort to create jobs and support sustainable livelihoods, the 2002 National Tourism Strategy identified rural tourism as a focus area. "The Department of Tourism is developing rural tourist." areas with specialised expertise in and promotion of arts, crafts, culture, heritage, and craftsmanship.". The government urged each state to include rural communities in tourism-related policies, which were developed in consultation with tourism department officials and local NGOs. These projects aim to introduce visitors to the village atmosphere through regional food, art, and cultural practices. Establishment of infrastructure, policy reform and liberalisation, investment incentives, maintenance of law and order, deployment of tourist policing, establishment of complaint mechanisms, and standardisation of goods and services were all considered important for rural tourism development. These research project experiences, involving 36 sites around the country, provided a wealth of knowledge about the relationship between community mobility and tourism policies.

Launched in 2003 and currently implemented in 36 locations across the country, the Internet Tourism Service-Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS) is an effort by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT), Government of India, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) together. The main objective of the project is to encourage sustainable social development, but it goes far beyond achieving more direct economic objectives of employment and income generation by focusing on a range of community-based projects and seeks to address multiple



issues at once, including gender equality, sustainable livelihoods, youth and women's empowerment, efforts to promote environmental sustainability, and cultural sensitivity. Also, tourism can influence the attitudes, values, and behaviours of tourists and locals, as it can be a transformative force and greatly enhance local economies across the country. They can and should. It has fundamentally changed in structure and ideology. Buoyed by the success of the 'Incredible India' campaign in attracting international tourists, the tourism industry is focusing on developing tourism in rural India. India's "Explore Rural India" initiative, which aims to attract international tourists to the country for extended stays and boost local incomes, has selected more than 167 rural tourism initiatives.

The Department of Tourism places great emphasis on teaching community skills related to tourism, such as trails and street lighting, in addition to improving the design of the sites. They worked with UNDP to provide residents with job training. While UNDP, through the ministry, is allocating Sh200,000 per area for skills development, the department has allocated Sh500,000 to build projects in remote areas. Hardware design provides the necessary infrastructure to welcome tourists, while software applications enhance capacity development, encourage tourism, and help host communities participate in the market. In some of our remote communities, rural tourism can help build sustainable communities. Governments should also prioritise recognising the benefits of rural tourism and contributing to a healthy and competitive economic climate. Local NGOs should collaborate with the government to develop rural tourist destinations and provide high-quality services to tourists as a result.

**Fig 1: State-by-state Completed or Nearly Completed Rural Tourism Projects****Advice for expanding rural tourism:**

To emphasise India's rural skills needs, the government should also support economic investment and human resource development in these sectors. Villages, which are likely to be rural areas of great tourist interest, should also be selected. Restructuring and liberalising pro-rural transport legislation should be supported. Steps must be taken to engage and encourage the community at all levels for its own sake alone. Significantly increase adequate construction and infrastructure facilities, such as accommodation, roads, airports, railways, local transport, communication networks, and other vital infrastructure needed to expand rural tourism. Should Alright. It is recommended that measures be implemented to improve the infrastructure, emphasise creativity and innovation, encourage public-private partnerships, monitor rural tourism data, and produce an annual report on the project.

**Conclusion:**

Constructive efforts are expected to promote rural tourism with the support of the Federal Government, State Government, Panchayat Samiti members, NGOs, and local stakeholders. A modern tourism experience is not complete without a visit to the countryside. Undoubtedly, rural tourism will be an important tool for sustainable human development, including the promotion of social integration and intercultural understanding as well as poverty reduction, employment generation, resource and environmental rehabilitation, the development of remote areas, and the development of women and other marginalised groups in the state. By encouraging community participation and mobilisation, the government should support more rural tourism initiatives to achieve sustainable economic growth and meaningful social change. Indian culture has always inspired great wonder.

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