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COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

In the tourism sector all over the world, ecotourism, which is a global alternative to mass tourism, is gaining popularity by concentrating on ecological tourists. Ecotourism is a worldwide substitute for the influx of tourists. Such emerging tourist trend is distinguished by a number of characteristics, two of which include actively seeking out new experiences and engaging in communication with locals. Within the confines of this research, the investigation result that was performed inside the Dang area of Gujarat are dissected and examined. The objective of the research was to collect information by requesting feedback from residents on the establishment of a tourist destination in the area. This was done with the idea of obtaining information. The significance of the hosts' hospitality, the exceptional ecological treasures of the region, and the engagement of the people were the focus points of the conversation that took place. The approach is derived on an empirical investigation that was conducted in a rural environment during the months of October 2023 to January 2024. This investigation was carried out for the purpose of achieving research. The local community has become aware of the potential financial advantages and job opportunities that may arise from the expansion of tourism, which is one of the most significant things that have occurred.

KEY WORDS: Ecotourism, Community, Regional Development, Hospitality, Expansion.

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INTRODUCTION

By the year 2024, the interests of visitors had shifted, which eventually led to their participation in a variety of different types of tourism. It's possible that they were looking for a place that gave local traditions, history, ethics, and culture a higher priority, or that they were interested in discovering new and unexplored tourist destinations. Travellers who are getting more active are searching for new experiences, and cultural diversity is an approach that is believed to be a means to improve their vacation. Locally, there has been an acknowledgment of the potential for incorporating new actors, methodologies, and private businesses into development activities. Nevertheless, vacationing when connected to natural & cultural resources that these towns possess is one of the enduring factors that contribute to the revitalization of these communities. Developing countries have the ability to coordinate their social and productive structures via the use of cooperatives and other social participants in industries that provide jobs, like tourism. Taking advantage of places' historical & ecological treasures in the process of strategy development ought to be initiated by the communities that are located in the immediate vicinity. According to Narang et al. (2016), while measuring the impact of tourism, two things that are essential to take into consideration are the number of visitors and the types of tourists, as well as the amount of engagement and influence that the local community has over tourism. Some projects like “Sustainable Tourism Eliminating Poverty (STEP) Programme”, which is overseen by the “World Tourism Organisation”, consider tourism to be a weapon that may be used to combat poverty. As per “World Tourism Organisation (2022)”, “sustainable tourism” is capable of making a substantial impact towards ending poverty & the growth of the economy in some regions. By making use of “natural & cultural” resources of the area, it is possible to build enterprises that provide goods and services, so creating employment possibilities for those with lower skill levels, particularly young people and women. Rather than replacing operations in the primary sector, this would always work in combination with such activities. The research that has been done on the topic suggests that the choice to promote tourism in economically disadvantaged rural regions of developing countries is influenced by a number of different political, cultural, social, economic, and environmental aspects.

The management of the supply and demand of tourists has led to the establishment of a number of well-known tourist sites. Providing an escape from everyday routines, ensuring consumer pleasure, and breaking the monotony of traditional tourism are all goals that have been urged to be accomplished through the promotion of local projects that incorporate natural features and recreational activities. Traditional agricultural practices and the economic structure of rural communities are experiencing transformations as a result of the shift that is taking place in these areas. Due to the activities associated with tourism, destination markets have been able to automatically respond to changes in demand, which has resulted in some growing places becoming appealing to particular consumer groups. Agricultural and livestock-based economies are strongly connected with new project opportunities, such as tourism that makes use of social, cultural, and natural resources. These chances are handled locally and are intimately integrated with the economy. Training and awareness for locals, infrastructure and equipment, and promotion are the three activities that are needed for the implementation of a specific tourist product, according to Brindar and Isha (2019). A regional tourism policy that focuses on these three activities is important.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide research on the possibilities of a revolutionary type of tourism that incorporates cultural & environmental attractions in order to generate considerable income and job prospects. The basic thesis of the research is that this type of tourism has to be regarded as an addition to the existing economic activities, rather than as a replacement for them. Furthermore, it is applicable to both urban & rural settings. In a similar vein, we present a literature review on the topic of interactions between tourists & locals, which are far more robust than those that occur in traditional tourism (Zeba and Farid, 2023). This is mostly attributable to the proactive engagement of hosts (Narang et al., 2016; Lalith, 2007), as well as the requirement of studying a variety of cultures in order to improve this sector. In addition, we offer the most important findings from a field research that was conducted in the Dang region of Gujarat, which is a rural region that is extremely impoverished. Participants from the community were questioned about the possible benefits of creating cooperatives to promote the expansion of local tourism, as well as potential advantages & downsides of community tourism. For the purpose of conducting an analysis of the results of our field study, the researcher utilised a number of statistical and economic approaches.

In this scenario, transportation, housing, and food are the most important connections owing to the broad local participation. This is in contrast to the common belief that the

beginning and the end of a chain are the weakest points in the chain. It is essential to have assistance from both public and commercial institutions, as well as participation from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and local governments, in order to successfully plan activities. In this way, the expansion of tourism-related activities would be facilitated. For this reason, it is recommended that prospective small businesses in these areas expand their variety of products and services beyond only providing food and lodging. Additionally, they should provide ground transportation, function as tour guides, provide additional pursuits like extreme sports & vacations, and offer local things for sale. In addition, they should generally offer ground transportation.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this research, an extensive empirical investigation was carried out in the Dang region of Gujarat. Our goal in doing this research was to gain an understanding of the residents' self-perception, their perspectives on tourism in the region, and their recommendations for ways to enhance the tourist experience. A random selection process was used to identify the individuals who would participate in the research, and all of them were local residents. In every instance, variables were considered, including the geographical distribution of populace. The fieldwork was conducted throughout the months of October 2023 to January 2024. The criteria for the survey are presented at Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic of Dang Region

Area	Dang region of Gujarat
Population	2,26000 (2011 Sensex)
Sampling	645
Period	October to January 2024
Procedure	Simple Random Sampling

The researcher surveyed visitors based on their impressions and experiences without using a questionnaire as our research tool. “Describe your views on Community Based Tourism” is the sole question posed in the poll.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Table 2: Basic Information of the Respondents

Variable - Gender	Percentage	Variable - Age	Percentage
Female	54%	18 to 30	36%
Male	46%	31 to 40	34%
		41 to 50	19%
		Above 50	11%
Variable – Residing Area	Percentage	Variable - Education	Percentage
Rural	51%	Undergraduate	22%
Urban	49%	Graduate	49%
		Postgraduate	29%

Following the identification of the tourist resources, the first phase in the research was to conduct a survey with the local population, who are the principal recipients of the economic benefits that tourism provides. The survey was designed to inquire about the activities that the locals felt would be most significantly influenced by the development of the business. The most frequently selected replies are presented in Table 3. The establishment of businesses that are able to serve to a wide range of visitor demographics is the objective of the activities that are being made available within the “community-based tourism” sector.

Table 3: Expected Development Ratio

Activity	Female	Male
Lodgings & Food	11%	12%
Transportation	12%	6%
Infrastructure	9%	15%
Availability of Basic need products & Services	8%	6%
Medical Services & Medicine	9%	4%
Innovative Activities	14%	16%
Availability of Regional Crafted products	16%	11%
Area Guide and Mapping for Tourists with Staff	11%	16%
Cleanliness & Proper Sanitation	10%	14%
Total	100	100

According to the data presented in table 3, the three areas that are anticipated to have the greatest increase are the expansion of sales of handcrafted objects and the establishment of a tourist lodging system. According to the findings of our field survey in this region, ownership & management of majority hotels is of corporations that are either national or international in scope. The establishment of “community-based tourism” may provide locals the chance to construct their very own hotels, therefore enhancing their capacity to meet the

needs of visitors. It was seen that extra activities were being provided, and that athletes were actively working to better their skills.

During the second part of the research, the people of the region were asked to evaluate the tourist resources, infrastructure, and other characteristics that are essential for the growth of the business. Table 4 presents findings of average evaluation of region, with values ranging from one (poor) to three (very good). To make certain success of “community-based tourism”, the site in question must be equipped with resources that are designed to attract tourists. In addition, it is of the utmost importance to possess the bare minimum of the necessary infrastructure and fundamental services. “community-based tourism” has the potential to serve as a foundation for extensive socio-economic development in the region, which can ultimately lead to the creation of infrastructure that is provided to the local community for their benefit.

Table 4: Rating presented by Tourists

Variable - Charges	Average	Variable – Infrastructure & Transportation	Average
Environment	1.99	Connectivity	0.74
Hospitality	2.17	Transportation	1.85
Fees	2.12	Medical Services & Sanitation	1.94
Accommodation	2.36	Food	2.77
Amenities	Average	Tourist Based Services	Average
Cultural Programs	2.11	Area Guide	2.13
Innovative Activities	2.39	Mapping Information	1.64
Site Seeing & Trekking	2.48	Wild life Preservation	2.87
Sports Activities	1.99	Ecology	1.90

The data presented in Table 4 demonstrates that locals place a high priority on important elements while advertising a vacation location. The Dang region is renowned for its environment, wildlife, and hiking opportunities, all of which are considered to be essential advantages for the region's growth. The people who live in the region are also of the opinion that they feel there is room for development in areas such as public safety and cleanliness.

According to the findings of the research, inhabitants of the Dang region are of the opinion that private businesses would be the ones to benefit the most from the introduction of tourism in their region. However, they are also aware that the local community would also benefit greatly from the proposed tourist venture. Every member of the community is aware

of the positive effects that “community-based tourism” has on economic growth and the particular advantages that it offers to them. Research was conducted with the aim to determine how respondents in the area felt about the potential economic benefits and job opportunities that would be linked with a proposed tourism route. We solely take into consideration the favourable feedback received from members of the community in relation to these two economic factors. More than ninety percent of respondents feel that it would result in profits, and 87.4 percent believe that it would contribute to the creation of new jobs. It is important to note that the majority of people who participated in the survey believed that the creation of tourist routes would be highly helpful for the region.

CONCLUSION

Community tourism is quite common, particularly in nations that are still in the process of developing. A new approach to tourism is now being developed with the goal of providing specialized attractions that are beneficial to the economies of local communities and that create employment possibilities. Agriculture, fishing, and animal husbandry are examples of traditional occupations that should never be considered a substitute for this endeavour; rather, they should be regarded as complementary to it. The purpose of this study is to share our findings from the Dang region in Gujarat, which is now undergoing the construction of essential infrastructure through a public-private partnership. This would be a component of a more comprehensive and ambitious strategy, in which the local inhabitants would have the opportunity to pick the parameters for the growth of the tourism company. The primary findings of the study indicate that locals have a positive attitude toward this kind of tourism and perceive it to be a means of enhancing their economy and the number of job possibilities available to them. It is of the utmost importance to emphasize the fact that women and young people have substantial responsibilities in the process of establishing and supervising tourism attractions and events, as well as in the management of potential enterprises. The promotion of tourism would result in the improvement of the community's educational opportunities, healthcare facilities, and educational infrastructure. It was discovered through the survey that the locals are aware of the fact that they do not possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and certifications to produce high-quality items for the tourism industry. In a scenario like this one, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other organizations, such as national and international institutions, may be in charge of providing training to local persons.

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