

Rural Tourism of Arunachal Pradesh: Prospects and Challenges

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Abstract

In this paper an attempt has been made to study how the Rural Tourism helps to produce sustainable livelihood in Arunachal Pradesh. Rural Tourism can be plays a vital role to enhance economic development and employment generation of rural area through sustainable livelihood. Rural Tourism is a form of tourism that allows visitors to experience the lifestyle, culture and heritage of rural communities. Rural tourism in Arunachal Pradesh presents a unique opportunity to explore the rich culture, tradition and God gifted beauty of the state by supporting sustainable development and economic upliftment of local communities in remote areas. This paper stressed on the potentials and attraction of the rural tourism in the state by analyzing its natural and cultural assets while also describe the key challenges such as infrastructural limitations, policy gaps and environmental issues.

Keywords: Rural Tourism, Culture, Tradition, Sustainable development, Rural Community

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a one of the fastest growing industries in India as well as in Arunachal Pradesh. It is one of the huge sectors which provide economic development and create large employment. This industry is also considered as smokeless and sustainable industry. Rural Tourism is a type of tourism which exhibit culture, belief, ritual and traditional activities of the rural life. Rural Tourism has been able to preserve the values, and belief, protect the environment create employment opportunities, reduce unemployment, local handicrafts, increase the income and capital stakeholders and local people, increase production of

organic food and infrastructural development and provide possibilities for sustainable and economic development in rural region.

Arunachal Pradesh is one of the states where 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes habited, where over 70% of its population living in rural areas, its offers immense potentials for rural tourism. It is rich in cultural, traditional, festivals and uniquely blessed with natural resources. Tourism is one of the main industries among others like Agriculture and forest-based industries in Arunachal Pradesh. The various tourist destination located in the villages attract both domestic and international tourists.

II.OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

- The primary objective of the study is to examine the potential of rural tourism in Arunachal Pradesh
- To highlight the major challenges faced in developing rural tourism
- To highlight the benefits of rural tourism

III.METHOD AND MATERIALS: This study is descriptive type in nature and rural based basically on data of secondary sources. The data of secondary sources are collected from journals, websites and especially from Department of Tourism Arunachal Pradesh.

IV.PROSPECTS OF RURAL TOURISM IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH.

1. Scenic Villages: Rural Tourism is an exploration of hidden jewel of villages and remote areas. Arunachal Pradesh Village's has a treasure of the serene beauty where most of the villages are surrounded by hills, valleys and mountains slope. The actuals attraction of the villages are their traditional houses and Areas like Ziro valley Tawang, Mechuka, Anini, Dirang offer breath taking beauty. Siluk village of East Siang district is one of the cleanest village in the state and its offers breathtaking scenery, cultural insights and mesmerizing beauty of the mighty Siang River. Hong Village Asia's largest village is also located in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh. This village is famous for unique farming practice by Apatani tribe. Tsechu Village is a nestled in the scenic Tawang District is known for its monasteries and spiritual aura. The largest Tawang Monastery of India is in Tsechu Village. The state has thousands of

potentials villages to showcase their rural life, culture and traditional practices.

2. Tribal Culture: Arunachal Pradesh is a home of diverse tribes and the population is predominantly tribal belonging to the Indo-Mongoloid stock. The entire population is divided into three cultural groups based on socio-political religious affinities. The first group of tribes follow Buddhism. In this group Tribes like Monpa, Sherdukpen, Memba Khamptis and Singphos. The second group consists of tribes like Adi, Apatanis, Nyishi, Aka etc who practice ancient belief and indigenous practice of worshipping the Sun and Moon. This religion is known as Donyi Polo (which is literally means Sun and Moon). The third group of tribes are Nocte, Wancho and Tangsa who believe in a sort of animist religion and practice head hunting.

Being a tribal state festival is an essential and integral part of the socio-cultural life of the people of the state. Most of these festivals are related with agriculture and the rituals are for the bumper harvesting. The festivals mirror the culture the artistry and skill of the people in music and dance.

- 3 Handloom and Handicraft: The state is very rich in handloom and handicraft tradition and deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of its various tribes. The major crafts include weaving, wood carving, bamboo and cane products, mask making, carpet making, and local jewelry.
 - Weaving: Tribes like Adi, Apatani and Mishmi have a traditional art of weaving technique, intricate designs and vibrant colors and weaving process is done by hand using traditional loom. Large numbers of women are engaged in the weaving and some of the famous weaved items are skirts, bags, shawls, jackets and carpets.
 - Cane and bamboo: Cane and bamboo are naturally abundance in the state, both cane and bamboo are used impressively for making items like basket, mats, hats, furniture and various household items. All tribes have experts in making handicrafts items and these products are part and parcel of the tribal rural life and also these items are eco-friendly, durable and beautiful.
 - Wood carving: Wood carving intricate are a hallmark of Arunachal Pradesh. Tribes like Wancho and Nocte are renowned for their wood carving and they making different statue of man and animals,

furniture and religious objects, mythological figures and tribal deities.

- Mask making: Monpo tribe are skilled in crafting colorful masks making and it used in ceremonies and festivals. Artisans make masks from wood, bamboo and paper depicting tribal deities and it used in traditional dance and festival rituals.

4. Agre-based Tourism: Arunachal Pradesh is an agrarian state and almost 70% of its population are supporting by agriculture. The traditional type of cultivation such as shifting cultivation, terrace cultivation and Passi cultivation are practice in the state. Ziro valley is popular for their Fish-cum paddy cultivation. The climate of the state allows for the cultivation of crops like rice, maize, millet, ginger, mustard etc. The state also has a home of various fruits like banana, kiwi, orange, apple and pineapple. The visitors can participate in rice planting, traditional fishing and local farming practices.

5. Eco Tourism Activities: Arunachal Pradesh is a state which have blessed with varieties of flora and fauna. The state has claim to have four major varieties of the big cats in its jungle viz Tiger, Leopard, Snow leopard and clouded leopard. It is a home of more than 500 species of birds and orchids and some of them are highly endangered and restricted. Asia's largest orchidarium is located in Tipi in Arunachal Pradesh. The state has number of wildlife sanctuaries and National Parks namely Pakhui, Eaglenest, Kane, Mehao, Daying Ering memorial wildlife sanctuaries and Mouling and Namdapha national parks. Tourists can enjoy and participating in eco-tourism activities such as birds watching, trekking, hiking, river rafting, nature walks and all these activities are very popular in the rural area.

V. TRENDS OF TOURISM IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Arunachal Pradesh has 28 districts and all the districts has its potentials on rural tourism. The state is blessed with a unique blend of both natural and cultural diversity as a result it attracts domestic and foreign tourist.

TABLE 1

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
2015	352,176	6,453
2016	385,875	6,598
2017	443,211	7,147
2018	512,436	7,653
2019	555,639	7,825
2020 (Pandemic)	42,871	961
2021	26,440	182
2022	94,294	371
2023	722,956	1,793

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh

Table 1 Showed that the increasing trend of domestic and foreign tourist arrival in the state. In the year 2015 number of domestic tourists' arrival were 352176 Lakhs and in 2019 it has increased up to 555,639 lakhs, but due to pandemic the numbers were decline. The recovery started in 2022 and surged strongly in 2023 and reached 722956 lakhs. On the other hand, foreign tourist arrival was stable growth until 2019, a slight falls during Pandemic and then resurgence strongly in 2023.

VI.CHANLLENGES OF RURAL TOURISM IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH.

1. Lack of Economic Infrastructure: Arunachal Pradesh faces a major challenge in infrastructure development due to its hilly, mountainous terrain, sparse population and environmental sensitivity. These all factors create difficulties and expensive to make construction and maintenance of infrastructure especially roads and communication networks. And also state needs to balance development with

environmental protection and maintain sustainable practices. The region has also geological instability being an earthquake prone zone, its required specialized technique to constructs infrastructure. The settlement of the villages in the region are also scattered due to that it very difficult to plan and implement cost effective transport networks.

2. **Limited Awareness:** Rural Tourism is very new concept in the region as a result there is a lack of proper awareness about tourism and its benefit to the locality. The promotion and tourist facilities are also lacking in a region. Tourists may not be aware of rural destinations and also local community facing many problems to participating in tourism due to limited knowledge about industry and for the destinations.
3. **Lack of Capacity Building:** Capacity building is considered as a necessary and important component of any tourism development. Lack of support in capacity building for the local community from authorities, result in a lack of support and participation in tourism development. Therefore, the capacity building produces a positive attitude towards tourism and prepares the local community for tourism services.
4. **Environmental Concerns:** Tourism especially rural tourism is closely connected to biodiversity and the attractions created by the local and varied environment. It can also cause loss of diversity when land and resources are strained by excessive use and its impacts on vegetation, wildlife, mountain, and water resources exceed their carry capacity. A lack of land use planning and building regulations in many destinations has sprawling development.
5. **Safety and Security Issues:** Some of the district like Changlang, Tirap and Longding have an insurgency problem and the state have in bad light in terms of the security and safety of life and property. The side effect of that, many of the tourists consider the whole state as a disturbed state and so, there is sense of insecurity among the tourists while travelling in the region.
6. **Non- monetization of tourism products:** Most of the villages in the district's tourism resources like natural scenic, attractions and cultural attraction are not yet monetized at all. The natural asset like waterfalls, valleys etc. and the natural asset such as festivals, dances are not yet to be monetized. As a result, there is a loss of opportunity for income generation especially by the local community.

7. Lack of proper Amenities: The some of the villages in the district have critically lacks in basic amenities. There is lack of proper and decent amenities such as safe drinking water, sanitation, washroom and toilet facility, cafeteria and homestay adding to the inconveniences of the tourists while visiting the destinations.

VII. CONCLUSION

The development of rural tourism is very essential for a development of the state, like Arunachal Pradesh where more than 70% of the population living in its 5258 villages. Rural Tourism can also provide direct benefit to the local people or stakeholders, both economically and socially. Arunachal Pradesh has an abundant nature blessing and it has rich in their cultural and traditional diversity. The region is a one of the backward areas in the country, but it has the greatest potentials to develop the region through tourism sector especially rural tourism. Rural Tourism which is recognized as State's strength should be the main point in Arunachal Tourism's position, showcasing the rural life styles, art, culture, and locations with facilitative policies would help in realizing its true potentials for the development. Our rural villages have tremendous potentials to attract tourist in the state, if supported by necessary infrastructure and right state tourism policies.

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