CONTRIBUTION OF ECO-AGRI-RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS
CHAPTER – XII

CONTRIBUTION OF ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

12.1 THE INDIAN AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM INDUSTRY SCENARIO

India is known as land of villages. More than 70 crore farmers live in 5.5 lakhs of villages. Agriculture contributed about 18.5% of the national income, 85% of population of India still depends on agriculture is not merely as business but as is the true culture of India.

India ranks second worldwide in farm outputs agriculture and allied sectors like forestry, fishing accounted for 18% of the GDP in 2007, employed 70% of the total workforce. It is the largest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall national, socio-economic development of India.

India is a leader in the world in ‘Green Revolution, White Revolution, Blue Revolution, Yellow Revolution, Blood Revolutions”. Due to all these revolutions there are bright future prospects for eco – agri – rural tourism.

Farmers can find an additional source of income from agriculture, considering the fact that over 70% of the urban population has grown up without seeing a village.
Agri tourism is a 4300 crore industry and is an effective means of creating employment opportunities. For every job created, there are 11 direct jobs.

12.2 ROLE OF NATIONAL PLAN, 9\textsuperscript{TH} AND 10\textsuperscript{TH} FIVE YEAR PLAN TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

For any nation to achieve progress proper planning and policy making is important. Similarly national progress is achieved through concrete planning and policy making at national level.

The contribution of eco – agri – rural tourism towards national progress is definitely huge as villages and rural areas that have suffered backwardness since years will witness development of roads, rail and connectivity will be better. More development and connectivity will attract more schools, colleges, hospitals and other necessary infrastructure. Rural areas will march towards progress and with more schools and colleges the percentage of educated Indians will increase.

12.3 NATIONAL TOURISM POLICY 2002 : WITH RESPECT TO AGRI – RURAL - TOURISM

National Tourism Policy 2002 was conceptualized to enhance employment potential within tourism sector, emphasizing specially on agri rural tourism. The main highlights of the policy are;

a) Positioning and maintaining tourism development as a national priority activity.
b) Harness the direct and multiplier effects of tourism for employment generation, economic development and providing impetus to rural tourism.

c) Improving India’s existing rural tourism products and expanding these to meet new market requirements.

d) Plan and implement professionally managed integrated communications strategy called the ‘National Tourism Awareness Campaign’.

e) Creation of necessary infrastructure and superstructure to facilitate rural tourism development to foster growth.

12.4 THE 9TH FIVE YEAR PLAN

The policy objective in the ninth plan is to work towards creating a tourism product that provides the persons traveling to various places, rural interiors a pleasant experience on their trips, through an environment of peace, stability, security with an integrated system of physical infrastructure and superstructure.

Tourism should be a unifying force fostering better national understanding and progress through travel. The approach in the ninth plan is to concentrate on the development of selected centers and circuits, specially rural areas through effective public private partnership.

The focus is also on improvement in basic infrastructure, transport facilities, civic amenities, accommodation sector.
12.5 RURAL TOURISM SCHEME

Under the tenth five year plan, thought has been given to promote rural tourism as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio economic benefits to rural and its new geographic regions. The policy envisages involving the rural sector in the promotion of rural, heritage, adventure and eco tourism.

The states and Union territories governments have drawn up a detailed plan of action various activities such as improvement of surroundings which include landscaping, development of parks, fencing, compound wall, improvements of roads within panchayat limit are highlighted.

12.6 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA & UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) IN PROMOTION OF AGRI – RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India is implementing rural tourism scheme to promote rural tourism as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio economic benefits to rural and its new geographic regions in India.

The Government of India, Ministry of tourism in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have formulated framework priorities of strengthening decentralization and promoting gender equality in rural areas.

UNDP has committed funding support to the Government of India, Ministry of Tourism for the endogenous tourism project initiative.
The project seeks to promote local culture and craft based on eco tourism for sustainable livelihood and integrated rural development during tenth five year plan.

The primary facilitation of the endogenous tourism project is for capacity building / direct training, thereby enabling low income village communities create and articulate their skills from within the limits in villages, provision for improvement in solid waste management and sewerage management, procurement of equipments directly related to tourism like water sports, adventure sports, eco-friendly modes of transportation within tourism zones, signages, refurbishment of monuments, reception centers, tourist accommodation and other activities related to tourism.

12.7 IMPORTANCE OF ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

(Figure: 12.1)
12.8 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN AURANGABAD SITES, BECAUSE OF ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS NATIONAL PROGRESS

These five identified sites are not well connected with highways, where previously the roads were not developed. The rural tourism in India is ought to be made vibrant by the schemes of the Ministry of Rural Development such as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY), Transportation has become extremely smooth because of such government initiatives which attribute towards national progress. Road, rail, air connectivity is better because of eco – agri – rural tourism.

12.9 ACCOMMODATION

Because of eco – agri – rural tourism all types of accommodation facilities are developed. Good and quality accommodation is extremely important for any development and progress. At Aurangabad sites because of eco – agri – rural tourism, quality accommodation is developed. Even unique farm accommodation is developed for niche and discerning tourists. Those who don’t want farm accommodation for them nearby towns provide good accommodation facilities.

12.10 RURAL TOURISM CREATES EMPLOYMENT

One of the most significant benefits of eco – agri – rural tourism is employment generation. Eco – agri – rural tourism has provided the farmers a source of additional income on their existing
assets. Various direct and indirect employment opportunities are created through eco – agri – rural tourism. A constant theme within the literature, especially that generate by government agencies, is the potential for tourism to create employment opportunities. Rural tourism areas are reliant on stimulating demand both domestically and internationally.

Every Rs. 1 million invested creates 47.5 directly tourism jobs, indirect 89 jobs. In agriculture more jobs i.e. 44.6 jobs are created compared to manufacturing 12.6 jobs.

12.11 OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

The employment theme is extended to include specific opportunities for youth within rural communities in the hope that tourism may provide an incentive for them to remain employed. The employment of local youths as tour guides has given gainful employment to a large number of unemployed in the village. The tourism industry is often promoted as an exciting and growing industry suited to the energies and enthusiasm of young people.

Career options are enhanced with the opportunities for training and direct involvement in running tourism businesses, especially those within small communities.

12.12 OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSIFICATION

Rural communities have been forced to try and survive the problems of rural downturn, drought and diminishing returns. Tourism is promoted as one way of diversifying their economic base via the alternative crop that tourism can represent to rural communities.
Having unused or under utilized on farm assets was a motivating factor for nearly half of farm stay operators to consider converting these assets to use in tourism. Diversification into rural tourism tends to stimulate new developments and enterprises within a rural community enabling locations in decline to take control of their economic destiny.

Rural tourism development eventually diversifies the resident population of a community along with the product offerings of the region. These offerings include changed agricultural activity and changed mixed goods and services.

12.13 NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

Eco – agri – rural tourism generates new opportunities for industry. Even those rural businesses not directly involved in tourism can benefit from tourist activity through developing close relationship with tourist facilities where local foods can be used as part of the tourism offering in a locality. Rural tourism facilitates expansion of complimentary businesses such as service stations and new businesses are created to cater for tourist needs for hospitality services recreational activities and arts / crafts.

12.14 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM ENHANCES AND REVITALIZES COMMUNITY PRIDE

A tourism industry which celebrates the historical, constitutional and cultural distinctiveness of very small jurisdictions underscores and reinforces the identity of those small places in Mc World. They highlight the value of natural and man made environments for both tourists and hosts and the capacity of tourism to
use and build upon traditional skills, with the rural way of life a critical component of community identity.

Where indigenous rural tourism is involved, tourism is cited as keeping traditional culture strong and that communities feel pride in community tourism achievements.

Amenities play a fundamental role in shaping a community’s identity and pride and so the potential of tourism for improvements to facilities and amenities has positive implications for community pride, particularly rural museums as an important repository of rural culture. The involvement of women in rural tourism results in stronger, sensitivity to their environment and heightened interest in maintaining the aesthetic values of their region. Gastronomic tourism product reinforces the image of local produce and conserves traditional diversity of food and beverage production.

12.15 PRESERVATION OF RURAL CULTURE AND HERITAGE

So on one hand proponents of tourism (usually governments) state that it facilitates cultural exchange, transformation and social contact and then promote its capacity to preserve rural culture and heritage. On face value this may represent a paradox, but tourism does have a capacity to provide the impetus for preservation of cultural and rural heritage while it acts as a vector for cultural exchange.

In rural tourism the sense of place is a fundamental element in both the tourists and host community. Feelings of what the area provides in terms of attract to visit and live in. This sense of place is
maintained partly through rural museums which play a vital role in preserving heritage.

12.16 CULTURAL AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE

The motivation for farm hosts engaging with tourism is an much a social driver as an economic one, and meeting and socializing with people is the main reason for remaining in the tourism business even when the returns are poor. Meaningful relationships and often friendship result from the interaction with tourists. These meaningful social exchanges are in part dependent on the nature of the rural lifestyle and the low numbers of tourists.

12.17 UPLIFTMENT OF RURAL ARTISTS AND CRAFTSMAN

Eco – Agro – Rural Tourism helps not only in preserving but also uplifting the rural artists and craftsman. Tourists second favorite activity is shopping. Local arts and crafts have always been in demand by domestic and foreign tourists. These include indigenous products, wood work, food items, crafts and other rural specialty value added products produced on the farms. These are quality products which represent ethnicity hence tourist are attracted and keep coming back to buy them.

Thus eco – agri – rural tourism provides ideal platform for local artisans and craftsman and brings about their up liftment.

12.18 EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

No nation can fully progress without participation of women. Eco – agri – rural tourism recognizes the role of women in civil society. Eco – agri – rural tourism has also contributed to the
emancipation of women and the elimination of poverty, especially in the developing nation like India. Due to eco – agri – rural tourism several initiatives like community based initiatives, micro credit, bachat gat, self help groups, local women’s co-operatives, other income generating activities are implemented which give women employment and alternate livelihood opportunities so that women are empowered and become financially independent.

12.19 SOCIAL OR NON – ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM

Rural tourism also brings a number of intangible benefits. It offers educations, social, cultural and other political values. It brings in international understanding. Travel widens knowledge and reduces tensions. This very much applies to all the Touristic regions specially like India, being vast and diverse country with rich regions culture and languages. The inter-region and inter-region movement of people is the main factor which has kept India together in the past and will help in shaping us into a fully integrated nation in the future.

12.20 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM IMPROVES STANDARD OF LIVING

The visit by visitors to a country affects the living pattern of indigenous people. The way visitors conduct themselves and their personal relationships with citizen of the host country often have a profound effect upon the mode of life and the attitude of the local people.
12.21 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM TOWARDS PASSPORT OF PEACE

International travel break down the barriers of suspicion and exclusiveness among the nations. It is a major force for peace, understanding and harmony in the world. The two way travel is foremost catalyst for peace. The face to face meeting of the people erases frontiers between their nations and promotes greater understanding and a keen insight into the common problems. It contributes to an open world and free movement of culture and commerce for the benefit of all mankind. It is a most powerful force in promoting unity in the world.

12.22 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

When people travel to distant lands, they gain an insight into the customs, traditions and ways of life of other people and are thus able to perceive the underlying unity of the human society.

In creating a better appreciation of other people’s way of life and institutions, tourism may create good will for a country.

The need to cater tourists requirements has forced the travel exporters to permit the influx of foreign culture and informational influences like liberalized magazine, movies, music etc. Tourists come in contact with the places they visit and with their inhabitants, and social exchange takes place. Their presence and social background affect the social structure and mode of life at tourist destination. Tourists are also in turn affected by the experience. They carry back home with them habits and a new outlook on life.
12.23 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Tourism, it was felt is a passport for peace. It has the objective of bringing mankind closer together. All vacations involve change and adaptation. Groups from different races, regions and political areas meet and intermingle. Tourism can be organized in such a way so that many of the individual, family and general social qualities could be facilitated.

It removes all barriers between its own nationals, in addition to increasing its intellectual and spiritual heritage through a better knowledge of the world. Tourism is a passport for peace, just as true sportsmanship is. Both had the objective of bringing mankind closer together.

12.24 EDUCATIONAL VALUE THROUGH ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM

The new education for today is tourism, for it fosters a feeling of love understanding and goodwill. Cultural factors attract tourists to various destinations, architecture, historical monuments. Festivals and exhibitions rely heavily on visitors traffic for their audience and attendance. In the activities in which tourists engage there is also educational and cultural significance.

Tourism is a channel through which we can promote knowledge and understanding among the people of the world. Thus tourism is an education of other peoples habits, society, food, dress and a whole way of life without any preceptors professing the desirability of love and goodwill for humanity.
12.25 ECO – AGRI – RURAL TOURISM BRINGS ABOUT DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Eco – Agri – Rural Tourism brings about development in educational institutions at primary secondary level and colleges affiliated to Universities. It also spreads and creates awareness about education. Anganwadi, Balwadi, Ashramshala, Sakharshala, Vocational Educational Institutes at high school level, agricultural schools are also developed due to eco – agri – rural tourism.

12.26 AGRI FARM TOURISM

Education and training is given to the farmers and rural people of the villages such as:

01 Soil and Water Conservation
02 Education and Practices
03 Ecology Maintenance
04 Eco Tourism in Villages
05 Poultry Farming
06 Stall fed goat farming
07 Emu bird farming
08 Preservation and preparation of fruit and vegetable products
09 Dairy milk and milk products
10 Preparation of vermiculture, compost and organic manures
11 Mushroom training
12 Sericulture training
13 Wooden toys and articles
The contribution of eco – agri – rural tourism towards national progress is huge because of chronic backwardness in rural areas. Eco – agri – rural tourism brings about economic benefits to rural sectors it brings about awareness of health and hygiene in the villages, it enhances employment opportunities. It provides alternate means of production to rural entrepreneurs. It also creates infrastructural development and socio economic benefits to host communities.

Most importantly it also aims at poverty alleviation, by adopting pro poor approach which helps in eradicating poverty and uplifting the overall social, economic standard and lifestyle of downtrodden rural communities in India.
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