

ALTERNATIVE TOURISM IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract

The era which saw the rise of mass tourism (particularly with widespread ownership of the automobile in the United States in the 1950s) was a time of great optimism and enthusiasm not only for holidays themselves but also for the developmental potential of tourism. Despite the predominance of “boosterism” in the tourism arena (Hall, 2000), the limitations and damages of mass tourism became apparent as early as the 1970s with the degradation of tourist destinations particularly those that are having fragile eco-systems. As a result, mass tourism was called into question. Negative impacts included crowding, environmental degradation, pollution, urban sprawl and loss of habitats. Economical disenchantment with tourism arose as the benefits that are assumed to accompany tourism development were often counterbalanced by leakages, inflation and the costs of associated damages of both an environmental and socio-cultural nature. Socially, tourism could damage a culture by commodifying it or undermining it through the impact of the demonstration effect. People could be displaced from their land, land might be taken for alternative productive usage and workers and other community resources might be diverted to cater to tourism. These negative ecological, social and economic aspects are magnified with the explosion of tourism in recent decades. Alternative tourism has been proposed as a response that can provide solutions to the economic, ecological and social difficulties that can accompany uncontrolled mass tourism. In this background the current paper highlights the possibilities and viabilities of alternative tourism in Jammu and Kashmir which falls in Himalayan region and therefore becomes important to look at the better options as for as tourism is concerned in Jammu and Kashmir. The paper also highlights the possible opportunities and challenges in realizing the option of alternative tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Words: Alternative tourism, Mass tourism, sustainable tourism, Jammu and Kashmir

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a growing market and is showing tremendous growth in this current scenario by spreading its arms all over the world. Tourism makes an enormous contribution to local economies, job creation and sustainable development, and can play a lead role in the transformation to the Green Economy, although it has not enjoyed the recognition it deserves at the tables of policymakers and world leaders (UNWTO,

2010). On one side it is generating positive fruitful results in the development of destinations, heritage, culture and economies and on the other side it is also creating challenges in the existence of destinations and other tourism products like- culture, ecology, etc. Because of these emerging challenges, a need to develop a safer approach towards tourism was raised, which leads to the emergence of 'alternative tourism'. The era which saw the rise of mass tourism (particularly with widespread ownership of the automobile in the United States in the 1950s) was a time of great optimism and enthusiasm not only for holidays themselves but also for the developmental potential of tourism. Despite the predominance of "boosterism" in the tourism arena (Hall, 2000), the limitations and damages of tourism became apparent as early as the 1970s with the degradation of those tourist destinations that were particularly having fragile eco-systems. As a result, mass tourism was called into question. Negative impacts included crowding, environmental degradation, pollution, urban sprawl and loss of habitats. Economical disenchantment with tourism arose as the benefits that are assumed to accompany tourism development were often counterbalanced by leakages, inflation and the costs of associated damages of both an environmental and socio-cultural nature. Socially, tourism could damage a culture by commodifying it or undermining it through the impact of the demonstration effect. People could be displaced from their land, land might be taken from alternative productive usage and workers and other community resources might be diverted to cater to tourism. These negative ecological, social and economic aspects are magnified with the explosion of tourism in recent decades. Alternative tourism has been proposed as a response that can provide solutions to the economic, ecological and social difficulties that can accompany uncontrolled mass tourism. The birth of alternative tourism was due to high criticism for mass tourism and its negative effects on destination areas. Alternative tourism incorporated soft tourism, small-scale tourism, green tourism, nature tourism and integrated tourism. Alternative tourism was used as a hope for proving consistency with natural, social and community values, as alternative tourism could have less negative effects on destination areas, environment and population without diminishing positive economic effects (Smith and Eadington, 1992). Alternative tourism grew rapidly and out of the need to remedy mass tourism's negatively impact on the environment and society, which could affect the attractiveness of a given destination from a long term prospective (Moscardo, 2001). Alternative tourism emphasized the idea of preserving social, natural and historical assets of tourist destinations. Hence, it was considered as the main factor in tourism development. As a consequence of alternative tourism, the concept of sustainable tourism was used as the main goal for tourism development (Moscardo, 2001).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To have conceptual analysis of the alternative tourism as a safer option for sustainable tourism
2. To find out the opportunities and barriers in realizing alternative forms of tourism in J&K

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In view of the specific objectives, methodology followed in carrying out the present study involved mainly the use of data from secondary sources, collected from various organizations like United Nations World Tourism Organization, World Travel and Tourism Council, Ministry of Tourism-GOI, Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation and Directorate of Tourism (Jammu/Kashmir).

Alternative tourism in the context of alternative development

At the end of World War II and the advent of the de-colonization movement in the 1950s and 1960s, concern grew with how to achieve development in societies around the globe. Since that time there has been a plethora of paradigms each with its own vision on the meaning and means of attaining development. Earliest was the modernization paradigm which posited that societies occupy various points along a continuum between tradition and modernity and that economic growth was the key to progress along the continuum to an advanced modern society (Rostow, 1960). This position was challenged by the dependency school of thought prominent from the 1960s which held that “capitalist development in the core, metropolitan centers perpetuates underdevelopment in the periphery as a result of economic surpluses in the periphery being expropriated by foreign enterprises, misused by the state or squandered by the traditional elites” (Sharpley, 2000b). As a result this position encouraged societies to adopt socialist-led (Sharpley, 2000b) and “inward oriented” development strategies based on industrialization geared to import substitution (Brohman, 1996). From the 1980s, this paradigm was challenged by the rise of the neo-classical, neoliberal economists who advocated development through engagement in globalised free trade and an export-led development strategy. This would enable developing countries to exploit their comparative advantage in non-industrial sectors such as primary commodities and tourism. The final development paradigm evident is alternative development which rejects the linear and economic growth focused agendas of the other paradigms (Sharpley, 2000). Instead, it advocates a grassroots; community-concerned development plan which respects environmental limits and fosters human welfare in its broadest form by focusing upon basic needs. The origins and nature of alternative development and alternative tourism can only be understood in the context of the rise of the environmental movement in the mid-twentieth century. For instance, Honey notes how ecotourism grew in the 1970s as an offshoot of environmental consciousness that had been awakened by green movements, which were active in alerting people to what was interpreted as an impending ecological crisis (1999). Critical thought disseminated in such works as Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), Hardin’s *Tragedy of the Commons* (1968) and Arne Naess’ eco-philosophy of deep ecology (see Sessions, 1995) were catalysts to these developments. Organizations such as the World Conservation Union and the Worldwide Fund for Nature were founded in this period to channel action on the environment (Hardy *et al.*, 2002). The threat of nuclear war that loomed during the Cold War, the effects of industrial

pollution, deforestation, desertification, overpopulation, soil erosion and degradation and loss of biodiversity concentrated minds and indicated that human pressure on the environment was becoming increasingly unsustainable.

FORMS OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM AND OPPURTUNITIES IN JAMMUKASHMIR.

1.1 Ecotourism: A Path to Sustainability

Regarding the inception of ecotourism, Blamey writes that the term 'ecotourism' was first used by Hetzer in 1965 when he wrote his book *Environment, Tourism, and Culture*, and came to identify four principles of responsible tourism that include – minimizing negative environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximizing the welfare of and benefits to the local people, and increasing tourists satisfaction (Blamey, 2000). *The Ecotourism Society in north Bennington, Vermont* states, **“Ecotourism is responsible travel to natural areas which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of the local people”** *The World Conservation Union, 1996* states, **“Ecotourism is environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features - both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local populations.”** Both the terms Nature Tourism and Ecotourism are used. Nature Tourism is a form of tourism that involves travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific object of studying, admiring and enjoying the scenery, its wild plants and animals, as well as any cultural areas. Ecotourism is a form of tourism with low impact on the environment and wildlife due to the environmentally friendly tourist services and behavior of the tourists (e.g., low energy use, low pollution, and low disturbance) and due to careful selection, siting and area zoning, design and use of materials of tourist facilities. The concept of ecotourism – born 'within the womb' of the environmental movement in the 1970s and 1980s (Honey, 1999) is a very significant alternative concept standing against mass tourism, which had created a sense of dissatisfaction and various negative impacts in environmental and social realm. The conventional tourism always focuses on income and growth instead of conservation environment and culture of destination. In many places in the world, in the name of tourism, mass of forest destruction, various pollutions, cultural decay and other many problems have been emerged. Many countries have been facing serious environmental and social disorders due to mass tourism which only insists on quantity rather than quality tourism, number rather than sound economic benefits to the place and people of the destination. Mass forest and wildlife habitat destruction in Brazil, Indonesia, and some African countries, Sea beach pollution in America, Asia, and Africa are major concern of mass tourism by-products that contributes loss of many valuable species of ecosystem and displacement of many indigenous people from their own living places (Honey, 2008). Moreover the conventional tourism degrades local culture owing to invasion of westernization and economic disruption due to capitalistic practice and inflation. In this way alternate tourism hopes to lead the

tourism in responsible way. Unlike the mass tourism, alternative tourism, albeit various in types, is in small scale, low impact, community and local based, very low leakage, very holistic and long-term. There are so many types of alternative tourism that have come into existence. They are nature-based tourism, responsible tourism, adventure tourism, green tourism, village tourism, culture tourism, and other many which are regarded as better tourism than mass tourism that has already caused various undesirable and deleterious impacts. However according to Wearing and Neil (2008), in general sense, alternative tourism can be broadly defined as a form of ecotourism that sets out to be consistent with natural, social, and community values that contribute more conservation understanding, and appreciation of the environment and culture and also maximum satisfaction to both guests and hosts. Some important forms of alternative tourism are described below

- *Nature-based Tourism*: Tourism entirely based on nature such as trekking, mountain climbing, surfing, rafting and other many activities including adventure tourism are known as nature-based tourism in which tourists should respect the intrinsic value of nature.
- *Cultural Tourism*: Tourism based on various cultural elements such as arts, music, Dance, language, songs, cultural and religious heritages, traditional customs, skills and Handicrafts of indigenous and local people that visitors enjoy with them and promote them.
- *Wildlife Tourism*: Tourism based on various wild-species in terrestrial, marine and aerial which tourists recognize the real value of these biological assets in ecosystem of the planet.
- *Educational Tourism*: Tourism run by educated and responsible tourists about the importance of nature, culture and ecosystem and also support for nature conservation.
- *Agri-tourism*: Tourism run basically by natural attraction on private farms comprising various traditional and indigenous farm activities like cattle herding, cowboy activities, sheep shearing, dairy farming, gardening, horse riding and other many more. Since the late 1990s, ecotourism has become a major subject of discussion at many conferences and in professional journals, books and project reports (Weaver, 2001). Also at the same time in both the developed and developing worlds, the realization came that ecotourism could be a means of sustainability in tourism and fulfill both conservation and development goals. Honey expresses similar views regarding the importance of ecotourism in his book, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* "Around the world, ecotourism has been hailed as a panacea: a way to fund conservation and scientific research, protect fragile and pristine ecosystems, benefit rural communities, promote development in poor countries, enhance ecological and cultural sensitivity, instill environmental awareness and social conscience in the travel industry, satisfy and educate the discriminating tourist, and some claim, build world peace" (Honey, 1999)

Ecotourism Resource base of Jammu and Kashmir

The ecotourism resource base is defined by its Outstanding Natural Features, Biological Features, Outstanding Cultural Features, and Potential Activities for ecotourist, and the Accessibility by sea, river,

road and tracks. The state of Jammu & Kashmir spans an area of 2,22,236 km² which accounts for 6.8% of the country. The area is divided into the 3 regions viz. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Of this about 21,267 km² is under forest cover (9.5% of the state and 0.65% of the country). Jammu & Kashmir within its boundaries ranges from the scorching heat of the plains of Jammu to the snow-capped mountains of Gulmarg in Kashmir and the cold desert climate of Ladakh. Broadly, the state of Jammu and Kashmir comprises three distinct climatic regions: humid sub-tropical region of Jammu, the temperate Kashmir Valley, and the cold arid deserts of Ladakh. This then would have implications for the flora and fauna of the region. The state described as “Paradise on Earth” is rich in flora and fauna. Scrub and deciduous forests characterize the hotter plains and while temperate forests clothe in the higher reaches. And, the Ladakh region is a cold desert with very stunted shrubby vegetation. Each of these supports their own complement of fauna

Potential Ecotourism Activities in Jammu and Kashmir

The potential ecotourism activities attractive to different type of visitors/ tourist are:

Forest based activities- Travelling to natural areas, taking part in treks and long excursions, trekking, jeep safari jungle tours, camping, wildlife viewing, bird watching and visit to wetlands.

River bound activities: Viewing of river borders wildlife, rafting, canoeing, fishing, and boating. ***Culture***

bound activities: In view of the immense possibilities and spread of cultural riches in the state, we also propose that some cultural visits can be involved within the larger framework of ecotourism activities. These include visitations to temples located within parks and so on. The investment in recreation and tourist facilities comprise:

- Forest recreation areas which could be possibly be developed in future city parks such as
The region around Ramnagar
- Forest recreation areas with multiple functions and type of visitors such as region like
The Nandini Wildlife Sanctuary
- Forest recreation area best to be developed for nature/ ecotourism only such as Dachigam and
TsoMoriri

Additionally, Ecotourism in Kashmir related to lake-forest tourism is still minimal. The Kashmiri culture is a major tourist attraction, in particular for its traditional crafts, houseboats, Wood carving and weaving. A visit to old growth forest where the wood was sourced traditionally has become increasingly difficult. This could be an approach in attracting tourists to the region by taking them on escorts to the nearby national parks, especially to the Dachigam region and show them the wood in their natural forms. It is necessary to understand that ecotourists in the real sense have a deep appreciation towards the way forestry resources have been used and it could be a manner to bring attention to them.

1.2. SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

The definition of sustainability in tourism is contentious; the proper terminology is not even subject to agreement as some analysts use the simple term “sustainable tourism”, others specify “ecologically sustainable tourism” (Dowling, 2000), while others view “sustainable development in tourism” as more appropriate (Wall, 1997a, 2000). Additionally, confusion is added when some analysts use the terms alternative tourism, ecotourism and sustainability in tourism as if they are synonymous, leading to imprecision, confusion and failure to address important concerns in tourism (Shaw & Williams, 2002). As Figure 1.0 shows, ecotourism is a subset of sustainable tourism while there is currently a strong relationship between sustainability, alternative and mass tourism as all factions of tourism are called upon to implement sustainable practices. Therefore, despite the views of some analysts, sustainability is not a type of alternative tourism. It is included in this discussion because sustainability has been a main driver of doing tourism differently by focusing on environmental impacts and limits to tourism. Butler provides a useful and concise definition of sustainable tourism as “tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time” (1999b, p. 36). He differentiates this concept from “tourism in the context of sustainable development” which he describes as: Tourism which is developed and maintained in the area (community, environment) in such a manner and at such a scale that it remains viable over an indefinite period and does not degrade or alter the environment (human and physical) in which it exists to such a degree that it prohibits the successful development and wellbeing of other activities and processes



Figure 1.0: Relationship between sustainable, alternative, mass and ecotourism (Weaver, 2001)

1.3. COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM AS A MODEL OF ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

The term Community Based Tourism (CBT) emerged in the mid 1990s. CBT is generally small scale and involves interactions between visitor and host community, particularly suited to rural and regional areas. CBT is commonly understood to be managed and owned by the community, for the community. It is a form of 'local' tourism, favoring local service providers and suppliers and focused on interpreting and communicating the local culture and environment. It has been pursued and supported by communities, local government agencies and non-government organizations (NGOs). There are a range of actual legal forms of the ownership and management in which communities participate.

Internationally there are a number of different terms used for very similar activities; for example, in Latin America the term Rural Tourism is often used, alongside CBT. In parts of Asia, Eco-tourism is often delivered via CBT. Typically Sustainable Tourism, Community Based Tourism, Rural tourism and Eco-tourism have similar objectives. Planning tourism to safeguard a destination's cultural heritage and enhance its natural heritage while at the same time improving the socio economic welfare of communities. Eco-tourism, rural and Community Based Tourism are seen as both a set of principles as well as a tourism market segment. Regardless of the actual terms used, there are some key processes and practices that can ensure CBT is appropriately and effectively considered, planned and managed for the benefit of both people and place.

The following attributes are common to CBT operations:

1. aiming to benefit local communities, particularly rural or indigenous people's or people in small towns, contributing to their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their cultural and environmental assets
2. Hosting tourists in the local community
3. Managing a tourism scheme communally
4. Sharing the profits/benefits equitably
5. Using a portion of the profits/resources for community development and/or to maintain and protect a community cultural or natural heritage asset (e.g. conservation)
6. Involving communities in tourism planning, on-going decision making, development and operations.

The Benefits of CBT Community based tourism has been popular as a means of supporting biodiversity conservation particularly in APEC developing countries and linking livelihoods with preserving biodiversity whilst reducing rural poverty and achieving both objectives sustainably (Kiss 2004).

CBT may enhance social sustainability by empowering local communities to manage their own resources, provide meaningful employment, and assist with capacity building and cultural preservation. Environmental benefits include income generation for communities to actively protect their land from degradation and could enhance conservation efforts to attract tourists especially with regard to eco-tourism initiatives.

Where it is working effectively, CBT

- supports local economic development through diversification of employment
- is financially viable
- respects and encourages equitable participation of local community
- is ecologically sustainable and minimizes impact on the environment
- conserves and promotes living cultural heritage and welfare
- educates visitors about culture and nature
- demonstrates good management practices
- ensures a quality and safe experience for all of individuals involved.

However, there are a number of risks associated with the developing CBT particularly where it is introduced to provide a 'quick fix' for communities without diverse livelihoods, resources or capacity.

COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM AND OPPURTUNITIES IN JAMMU ANDKASHMIR

Jammu and Kashmir with its vast potential and growing economy has immense potential for the sustenance of tourism industry. Tourism has no doubt remained an instrument of economic growth in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and has contributed a lot in developing the economy, particularly in Kashmir valley. Tourism is an important industry of Kashmir. This sector has given jobs to a large number of people of Kashmir and generated economic activities especially in the tertiary sectors. Its impact in Kashmir is visible in service industry sectors, such as transport, hospitality, horticulture, handicrafts and small scale industry

Community based tourism can be harnessed as a strategy for rural development. The development of a strong platform around the concept of community tourism is definitely useful for a region like Jammu and Kashmir where more than 70 percent of the population resides in rural areas. The trends of industrialization and development have had an urban centric approach across the world. Along with this, the stresses of urban life styles have led to a counter urbanization syndrome. This led to growing interest in rural areas. Rural development initiatives if taken in consideration with the concept of community based tourism can facilitate the process of community tourism in rural areas. The progress of community participation in tourism in turn can facilitate the process of rural development of the rural areas. The majority of people in Jammu and Kashmir live in villages. The main source of livelihood and income for people here is agriculture. There is huge unemployment among youth of Kashmir. Also there is a lack of industrial development. Community Tourism, if given considerable importance in Kashmir can become source of creating employment and income. Visiting any rural area by the tourists is accompanied by various other income generating activities like trained tourist guides, trained cooks, hotels, stalls etc. Developing these places in rural areas of Kashmir could benefit the rural people and could encourage the development of community tourism in the valley. In the hilly areas of the valley, the production of land is very low because of climatic constraints and practices of single crop cultivation. The people in villages mostly depend on agriculture. Due to less productivity, they are facing rural poverty. To solve the problem

of rural poverty they need to avail themselves of the allied sources of income generation options for these people. They have land but it is less productive, and this needs to be utilized for farm tourism activities like establishing large dairy farms, fish ponds, poultry farms, sheep farms, floriculture units, horticulture units etc. Such units should be established in such a way that they can become examples used in order to attract more domestic and international tourists. In addition, these units should become spots of recreation for the local people. These types of innovations in terms of rural tourism can become the instruments of increasing the rural economy. They can diversify the land use activities, create employment avenues and can reduce the rural poverty.

CHALLENGES TO ALTERNATIVE TOURISM

As environment conservation coupled with community participation are the main focal points of alternative tourism, it becomes imperative to point out the challenges and barriers in realizing the alternative forms of tourism as a safer approach towards sustainable development

Tosun (2000), in his study of limits to community participation in the tourism development process in developing countries pointed out that it is important to involve local community in tourism development process. The main aim of his research was to examine the limitations to public participation in the decision-making process of tourism development in developing countries though public participation in the benefits of tourism was not totally ignored. Tosun raised many questions on the concept of community participation in developing countries as according to him there are limits to community participation in the decision-making process of tourism development in the context of developing countries. Tosun classified these limitations across three heads i.e. (i) Operational Limitations (ii) Structural Limitations and (iii) Cultural Limitations to community participation in the tourism development process in many developing countries although they do not equally exist in every tourist destination. Firstly limitations at the operational level include (a) centralization of public administration of tourism, (b) lack of co-ordination, and (c) lack of information. Secondly structural limitations includes (a) attitudes of professionals (b) lack of expertise (c) elite domination (d) lack of appropriate legal system (e) lack of trained human resources (f) relatively high cost of community participation and lack of financial resources. Finally cultural limitations include (a) limited capacity of poor people and (b) apathy and low level of awareness in the local community. Tosun accepted that these limitations may be an extension of the prevailing social, political and economic structure in developing countries, which have prevented them from achieving a higher level of development. On the other hand, it should be accepted that community participation as citizen power is not a simple matter but it involves different ideological beliefs, political forces, administrative arrangements and re-distribution of wealth and power in developing countries.

Tosun (2004) states that most of the developing countries are characterized by a number of structural deficiencies, which can be grouped under three main headings- (a) socio-economic features, (b) political features, (c) cultural features. Socio economic factors includes low level of living, lack of services of

welfare state, high rates of population growth and dependency, low per capita national income, low economic growth rates, increasing income inequality, increasing unemployment and inadequate human resources. Secondly political features consists of features like high level of centralization in public administration system, elite domination in political life, high level of favoritism and nepotism, and high level of clashes among supporters of different ideologies or tribes. Finally a cultural feature includes apathy among the poor, lack of education and poor living in highly stratified societies. All these kind of deficiencies creates serious troubles in the process of community participation and slows down the destination development process.

Tosun (2006) suggested that future research should investigate preconditions for participatory tourism development approach and develop strategies to operationalise this proactive tourism development approach. Aref and Redzuan (2008) also pointed out that there are some factors which create hurdles in the actual participation of community in tourism development processes in case of developing countries. They applied the concept of barriers to community participation given by Tosun (2000) in their study conducted in Shiraz city of Iran. They included leaders of different communities of old and new city of Shiraz for the filling up of questionnaire. Their study identified barriers in both new and old cities of Shiraz, although some were more dominant then others in both these cities.

Conclusion.

This paper has attempted to show the ways in which an alternative tourism movement may contribute to the creation of sustainable tourism. As was shown, at their best, these forms of alternative tourism hold the seeds for potentially profound change. Thus ecotourism could lead to the development of an alternative consciousness which could see individuals and society accept the extension of rights to nature itself. Sustainability offers tourism the notion of limits and appropriate prioritization as tourism becomes embedded in social and environmental contexts

and not viewed merely as an economic phenomenon. Community-based tourism indicates that communities may choose to initiate and control their engagements with tourism thus using it as one tool at their disposal to secure the future they wish and securing a diversity of life ways rather than incorporation into the market mould of market civilization. Pro-poor tourism reminds us that the focus of tourism should be meeting the developmental needs of the host community; all of it and not just the elite. Peace through tourism suggests that the tourism encounter can be used to seek out both truth and justice in order to reconcile peoples and secure the harmonious co-existence that is imperiled by social and environmental crises. There is vast potential for the development of community based tourism as a form of alternative tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. If properly developed, community tourism could bring great benefits to the valley. It could be a

sustainable revenue generating project for rural development of the government. It can help the inflow of resources from the urban to the rural economy. It can prevent migration of rural people to urban areas which are crowded. 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. Community based 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 region apart from promoting social integration and international understanding.

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