

# POTENTIALS AND PROSPECTS OF RURAL TOURISM IN CAUVERY DELTA DISTRICTS OF TAMILNADU

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**Abstract :** The study is confined to tourism development especially the trends of Tourism in TamilNadu namely Rural Tourism. The common approach to tourism development in TamilNadu has been Religion, History, Hill station and culture. Hence, this study, latching onto the present tourism trend of the world, aims to open-up newer frontiers for Tourism Development. The Research problem of this study is, “To make an assessment of the potentials of rural tourism and to formulate effective framework for the practice of rural tourism in Delta Districtsof Tamilnadu by using the rural uniqueness of Cauvery Delta areas and offer solutions to the identified problems so as to make rural tourism at Delta Districts a grand success.”

**IndexTerms –Potentials, Cauvery Delta, Assessment, Tourism.**

## 1.Introduction

Districts in which the river splits into many parts and joins the lake or sea is called the Delta district. Cauvery Delta Zone (CDZ) lies in the eastern part of Tamil Nadu. It is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the east and the Palk straight on the south, Trichy **district** on the west, Perambalur, Ariyalur **districts** on the north west, Cuddalore **district** on the north and Pudukkottai **district** on the south west. Pudukottai, Nagapattinam, Thiruvarur, Thanjavur, Cuddalore are some of the main delta districts in TamilNadu.

Tourism, practiced and experienced, in this 21st century had begun as a form of entertainment wayback in the Roman period (3 BC to 3 AD). Since Romans were developing a systematic approach to many aspects of life such as travel, transport, politics, wayside accommodation, military, religion, games and even entertainment, the people of Roman kingdom were provided with organised services of livelihood both by the Political Administrators and by Individual organisers. The primary areas of entertainment were Spas, Saturnalias and Olympic Games. They covered the aspects of health, festival and Games. It was a pure form of recreation in the Roman Kingdom. It provided an experience of Tourism though they did not know the word Tourism. Etymologically the word Tourism was used first in 1811.

UNWTO has provided the latest definition for Tourism in the year 1991 “Tourism comprises the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and their purposes”. This definition will be followed for the purpose of this study.

## 2. Literture Review

Dr. Kulwant Singh Pathania and Dr. Arunkumar in their book **Tourism in India** (New Delhi: 2008), provide the detail about the Indian Tourism Overview and all destinations of Indian states and sightseeing, outdoor Tour in India with detailed information and have explained the different types of tourism which are practiced in India.

N. Jayapalan in the book, **History of India upto 1206 A.D. volume-I**, (New Delhi: 2001) have detailed about the origin of Cholas and the important architecture, village autonomy- an important administration of Cholas and the development of art and literature.

Aruna Guha, in the book **Welcome to TamilNadu**, (New Delhi: 2013), provides all information about tourist destinations in TamilNadu with excellent picture. It goes on to add various types of tourism available in TamilNadu ranging from Historical, Religious, Cultural and Hill Station Tourism.

Dr. Achintya Mahapatra in his book **Development of Indian Tourism Industry**, (New Delhi: 2013) has explained the important tourist places and its attractions in Tamil Nadu. He adds that the services of Tourism in TamilNadu are far better than any of the places that he has visited and ranks the services to the top five states of India.

Geetanjali in her book, **Career in Tourism**,(New Delhi:2010) provides the tourist attractions in TamilNadu and rulers and their contribution. She also explains the cultural heritage like, music, dance and other inspiration of cultural activities in TamilNadu.

Venkataraman.B, in the book, **Rajarajesvaram**,(Chennai:1985), provides the information about the formation of Chola empire in the ninth century A.D. in the peninsular portion of India and their contribution of art and architecture in TamilNadu. He also has explained the fertile land of Thanjavur.

J.M. Somasundaram, in the book **The Great Temple at Tanjore**, (Chennai: 1935), provides the details about the origin of the Chola dynasty in TamilNadu. He has explained the etymology of Thanjavur from Tanjan or refuge which makes it means that it is the city of refuge. He goes on to explain the geographical, political and cultural value of the royal city of Thanjavur.

## 2.1 Research Gap

The reviews that are presented in this section have provided a great clarity on the aspects of Rural Tourism, Tourism and Geography, Tourism in India, Tourism in TamilNadu, Tourism in Delta Districts and also on the Tourism Concepts. In spite of all the indepth studies, it is found that there is a dearth of material of research in the chosen area of this study namely Potentials and Prospects of Rural Tourism in Delta District. It is sincerely felt that Thanjavur being the Rice Bowl of India is also the heart of Rural Life for TamilNadu. It is aimed that the available resources in Thanjavur with respect to the rural world can be utilised for the promotion of turning it in to a Rural Tourism Destination. Hence, the study gains importance and is hoped that it will be beneficial for the development of Rural Tourism in Delta Districts.

## 2.2 Need For Study

The researcher, through the attempt has found that there is a significant shift among the motivations of tourists towards tourism in TamilNadu. The shift is primarily towards the latest trends of Tourism say culinary Tourism, Eco- Tourism and Rural Tourism. Hence, Delta Districts, the epitome of Historical Tourism in TamilNadu, was found to be apt to introduce with Rural Tourism as Delta places is also known as the "Rice Bowl of India" because of the highest percentage of paddy production in the entire India. Thus, to promote and project Delta Districts in a new perspective this study was carried out.

## 2.3 Scope of the Study

The study is confined to tourism development especially the trends of Tourism in TamilNadu namely Rural Tourism. The common approach to tourism development in TamilNadu has been Religion, History, Hill station and culture. Hence, this study, latching onto the present tourism trend of the world, aims to open-up newer frontiers for Tourism Development.

## 2.4 Statement of the Problem

The Research problem of this study is, **"To make an assessment of the potentials of rural tourism and to formulate effective framework for the practice of rural tourism in Delta Districts by using the rural uniqueness of Trichirappalli, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Thanjavur and Cuddalore and offer solutions to the identified problems so as to make rural tourism at Delta Districts a grand success."**

## 2.5 Period of the Study

The period of study for this research has been 2018-2019. Only during this time the span of rural tourism gained prominence.

## 2.6 Limitations of the Study

In this research, the Limitations of the Study are as follows

1. The domestic Tourists are hesitant to provide their profile and responses. The researcher had to convince them.
2. The awareness on Rural Tourism is below the regular standard.
3. The financial requirements for the study have been a limitation to some extent for the researcher.
4. The literary resources were needed to be formulated out of Tourism and Rural Potential of the destination.
5. The beneficiaries of the rural tourism are new and hence the data have not been tabulated at their end.

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The method of collecting data for this study was both primary data and secondary. Framing questionnaires directly to the national and international tourists, the data was collected from the respondents and the collected data was pre-tested for technical aspects to make to strengthen the questionnaire. The samples from tourists were collected, Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Cuddalore Districts, as the places attract most of the tourists. The major tourist destinations of the district such as Thanjavur Big Temple, Navagraha Temples in Kumbakonam, Thiruvaiyaru, PunnaiNallur Mariamman, Chidambaram Natarajar Temple, Poombuhar and Pitchavaram Beaches, and Swamimalai are the major places of tourists where tourists gather in sizeable number. Opinion survey was collected directly through the interaction with the both national and international tourists in these places.

### 3.2 Sampling Method

Sampling is the process of selecting of samples from a particular universe. A survey was conducted among the tourists for the purpose of this study. The samples among the tourists were selected both from foreign and from domestic tourists using Random

Sampling Method . The weightage among the foreign and domestic tourist was fixed as 25:75 because from the tourist statistics of Delta Districts. This framework amounts to 47 foreign and 255 domestic respondents.

#### 4. Analysis and Interpretation

##### 4.1 Profile of the Respondents

Respondents are the source for the information on any study. The profiles of the respondents are formulated in this section on the aspects of their age group, gender profile, educational level and income level.

##### Genderwise Respondents

Table 1.1 Genderwise distribution of Respondents

	Foreign(N=47)	Domestic(N=255)	Total
Male	30 ( 9.93%)	176 ( 58.28%)	206 (68.21 %)
Female	17 ( 5.63%)	79 ( 26.16%)	96 ( 31.79%)
Total	47 (13.25 %)	255 (84.44 %)	302 (100.00 %)

##### Interpretation

Table 1.1 exhibits the gender difference among respondents. In the case of domestic tourists, 206 respondents are male, whereas 96 respondents are female. In the case if foreign tourists 30 respondents are male, 17 respondents are female.

##### Findings

The study has thrown, that the participation of females' in tourism activities is low. It was expressed by the tourists that the female tourists need more security than the male tourists.

##### Agewise distribution of Respondents

Table 1.2: Agewise distribution of Respondents

Agewise Respondents	Foreign(N=47)	Domestic(N=255)	Total(N=302)
Years <=10	5	21	26
Years from <11 to <=30	8	48	56
Years From >=31 to <=50	13	133	146
Years from 51 and above	21	53	74
Total	47	255	302

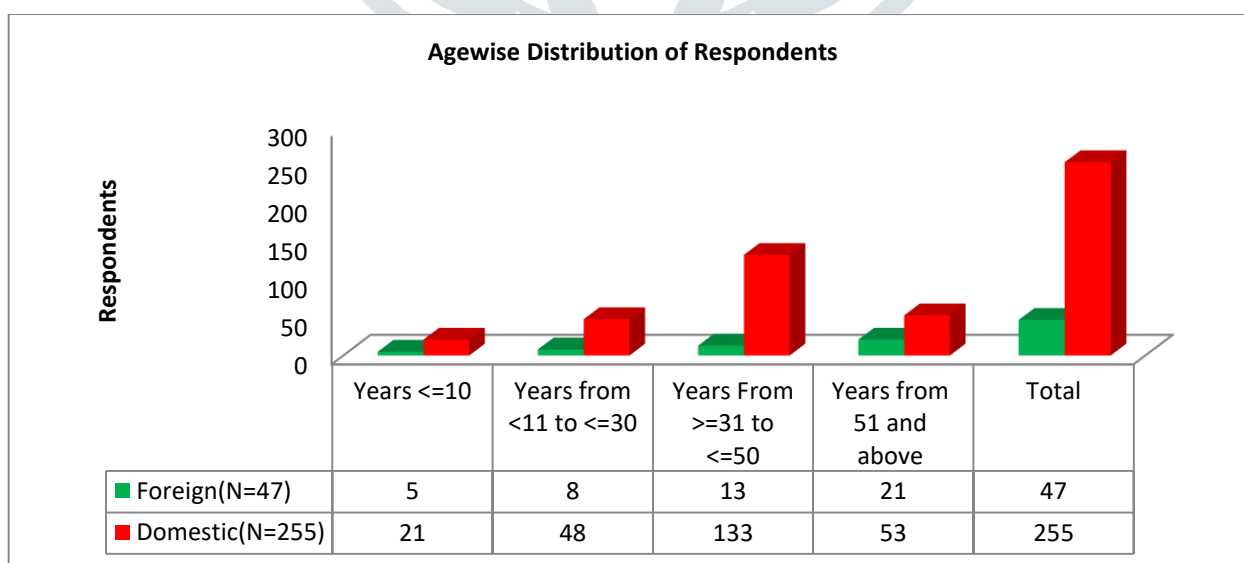


Figure 1.2 : Agewise Distribution of Respondents

##### Educational Level Distribution of Respondents

The level of education provides the much needed clarity on issues of the world.

Table 1.3: Educational level Distribution of Respondents

S.No	Educational Qualification	Domestic Tourists(N=47)		Foreign Tourists(N=255)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Illiterate	0	0	26	10.20
2.	School SSLC/HSC	3	6.38	51	20.00
3.	Degree	3	6.38	51	20.00
4.	Post graduate	17	36.17	75	29.41
5.	Professionals	24	51.06	52	20.39
	Total	47	100.00	255	100.00

**Interpretation**

The educational qualification of respondents falls under the Category School SSLC/HSC, Degree, Post graduate and Professionals namely Engineer, Doctor and Lawyer. It is found from the above table that most of the domestic tourists are post graduate with 75(29.41%) respondents. It is followed by the professional with 52(20.39%) respondents. It is also found from the table that most of the foreign tourists are post graduate with 17(36.17%) respondents, the professionals are 24(51.06%) respondents.

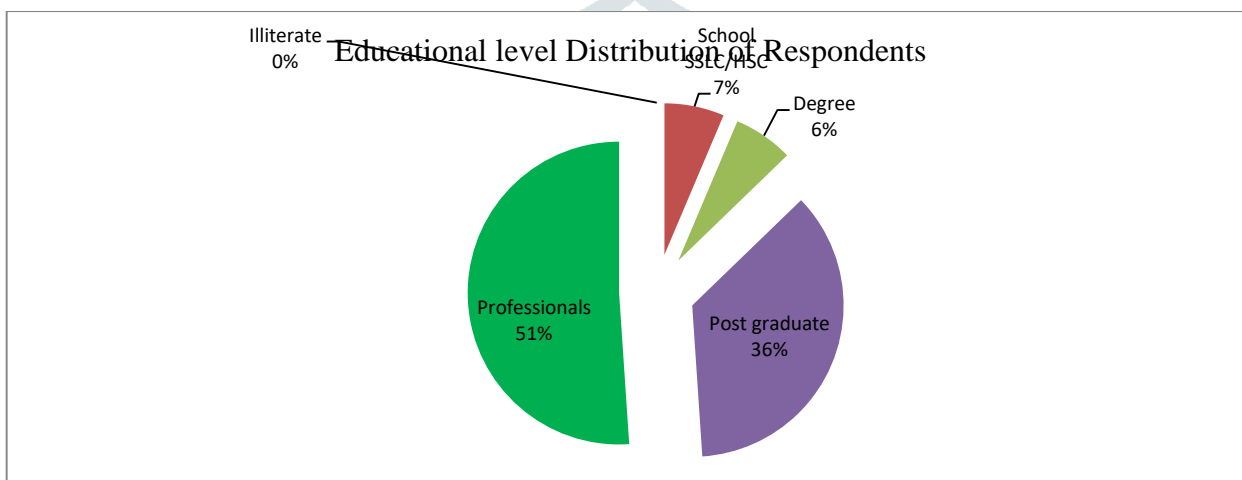


Figure 1.3: Educational level Distribution of Respondents

**Findings**

From the inference of the table it is explain that maximum respondents are educated. In this view it is recommended that tourism activities will be attracted all categories of respondents.

**Tourism Types**

There are enormous types of tourism. This part brings out the types of tourism practiced at Delta Districts.

Table 1.3 Types of Tourism available at Delta Districts of Tamilnadu

S.No	Types of Tourism	Foreign Tourists(N=47)		Domestic Tourists(N=255)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Historical Tourism	12	25.53	64	25.10
2.	Religious Tourism	12	25.53	75	29.41
3.	Cultural Tourism	8	17.02	38	14.90
4.	Heritage Tourism	6	12.77	24	9.41
5.	Adventure Tourism	2	4.26	12	4.71
6.	Rural Tourism	7	14.89	42	16.47
	Total	47	100.00	255	100.00

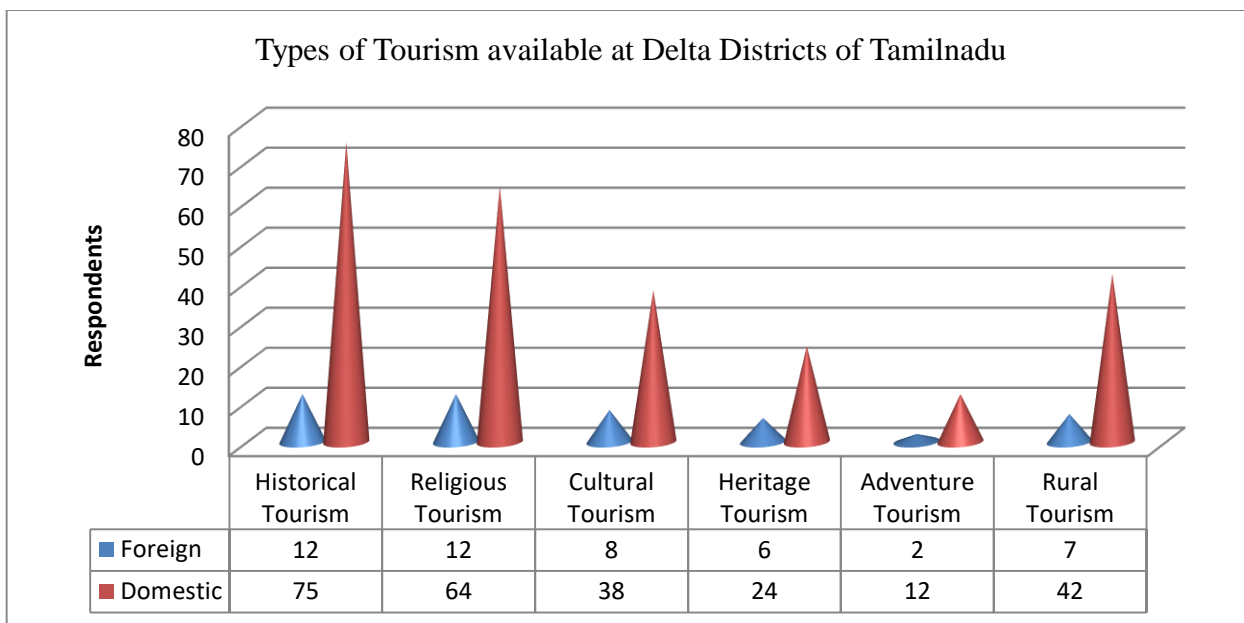


Figure 1.4 : Types of Tourism available at Delta Districts of Tamilnadu

**Interpretation**

This table details the types of tourism experience for respondents who have visited Delta Districts on tourism reasons. It is inferred from the table that, the types of tourism experience of respondents fall in less than six categories i.e. historical, religious, cultural, heritage, adventure and rural tourism. In the case of domestic tourists the category religious tourism tops the table with 75(29.41%) respondents. It is followed by the category historical tourism with 64(25.10%) respondents, cultural tourism category has 38(14.90%) respondents and the heritage tourism category with 24(9.41%) respondents. Further the rural tourism experience having 42(16.47%) respondents.

In the case of foreign tourists it is found that the maximum number of respondents has visited Delta Districts for experiencing historical tourism i.e. 12(25.53%) of respondents. It is followed by 8(17.02%) of respondents experiencing the cultural tourism, 6(12.77%) of respondents are experiencing the heritage tourism activities, 7(14.89%) respondents are experiencing the rural tourism activities. Further (12) respondents with 25.53 percent have visited Delta Districts for religious purpose.

**Findings**

It is inferred from the above table that the types of tourism at Cavery Delta ranges as Historical, religious, cultural, heritage, adventure and rural tourism.

**Frequency of Tour Programme among Respondents**

Table 1.3: Frequency of Tour Programme among Respondents

S.No	Frequency	Foreign Tourists(N=47)		Domestic Tourists(N=255)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Once in six months	8	17.02	51	20.00
2.	Once in a year	21	44.68	131	51.37
3.	Every weekend	1	2.13	15	5.88
4.	Only during festival time	8	17.02	34	13.33
5	Visiting Friends and Relatives	9	19.15	24	9.41
	Total	47	100.00	255	100.00

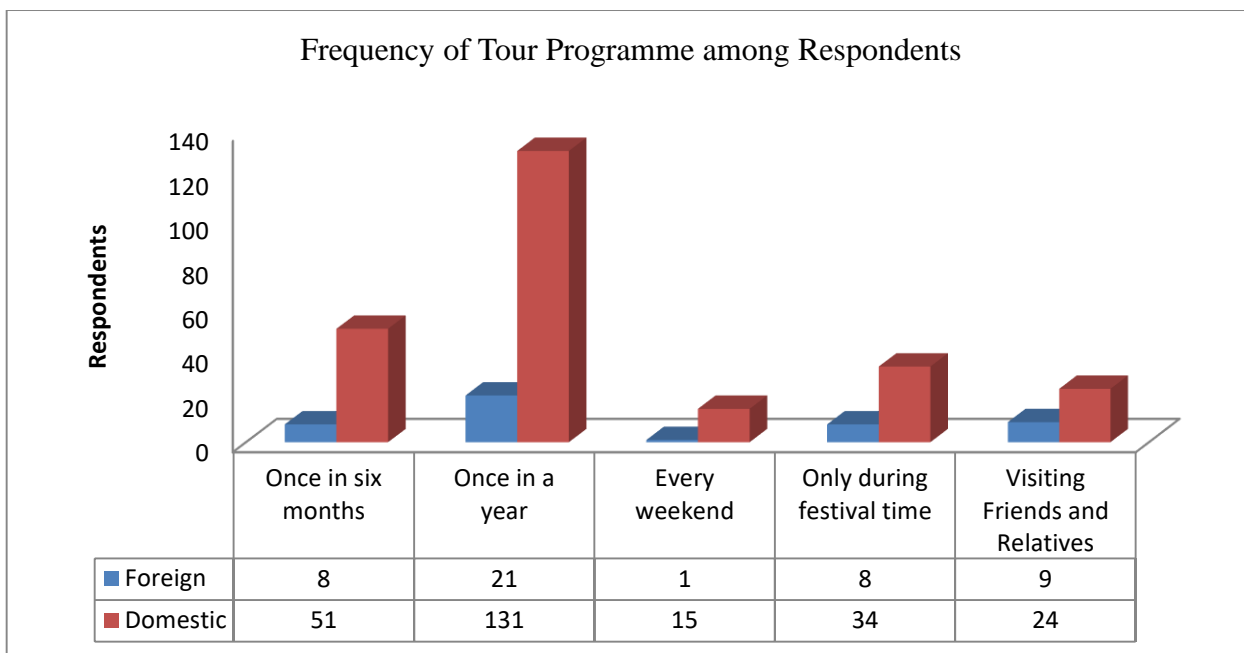


Figure 1.4 : Frequency of Tour Programme among Respondents

**Interpretation**

The engagement of the tour programme of respondents falls under the category once in six months, once in a year, every weekend, only during festival time, only Visiting Friends and Relatives. It is found from the table that most of the domestic tourists are engaging tour in once in a year it shows with 131(51.37%) respondents. Further they are touring once in six months with 51(20.00%) respondents, 24(9.41%) respondents engaging tour on Visiting Friends and Relatives, 15(5.88%) respondents are engaging tour programme in every weekend, 34(13.33%) respondents are touring only during festival time.

It is seen from the table that most of the foreign tourists are engaging the tour programme once in a year with 21(44.68%) respondents. Further 8(17.02%) respondents are engaging tour programme once in six months, 1(2.13%) respondents are engaging the tour every weekend, 8(17.02%) respondents are touring only during the festival time and 9(19.15%) respondent engaging tour on Visiting Friends and Relatives.

**Findings**

From the inference of the table it is clear that maximum respondents are engaging tour once in a year. In this view it is recommended that the Government and private organisations give paid annual holidays for their employees.

**Findings, Suggestions and Conclusions**

This study **Potentials and Prospects of rural tourism in Delta Districts of Tamilnadu** has made its efforts to bring in various aspects of Rural Tourism Potentials in Cavery basins of Tiruchirappalli, Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Cuddalore Districts. Thanjavur is a land of historic importance, unique cultural background and a glorious heritage. It is one of the cultural centres in ancient India.

Rural tourism is making a valuable contribution to rural economies. It offers some benefits to the rural development. The beneficiaries are categorised into Transport, Tour Operators, Accommodation, Attraction and Amenities. Various problems and prospects of beneficiaries and valuable suggestions are suggested for the developments of rural tourism are clarified through the analysis. Proposal from both the Government and the beneficiaries are explained so as to fulfil the objectives of the study.

In TamilNadu many districts, Delta Districts in particular, provides virtually all the facts of tourist interest. From time immemorial the district is famous for religious and cultural heritage tourism. Brahadeeswarar temple, Darasuram temple, Natarajar Temple, Thanjavur Big Temple, Ucchi Pillayar Temple Rockfort are World Heritage sites visited everyday by thousands of devotees and tourists. It was observed from the inflow of tourist that maximum tourist come to visit Delta Districts during the month of October to January. Further maximum tourists come from the country like France, Malaysia, Germany, and Italy. After analyzing the data both from the tourists and various stakeholders, it is noted that the hotel facilities must be increased sustainability to accommodate more tourists particularly in rural destinations in an eco-friendly manner. Thus, Delta Districts has been found by research as a vibrant option to promote rural, cultural and heritage tourism which has a high potential for the host communities towards a better socio-economic condition.

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