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Unveiling the Rich Tapestry of Rural Tourism in Rajasthan: A Focus on Bundi

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ABSTRACT: Rural tourism in India has emerged as a dynamic sector that showcases the diverse cultural heritage, traditional lifestyles, and pristine natural beauty of rural areas. With its vibrant traditions, handicrafts, folk arts, and warm hospitality, rural India offers an authentic and immersive experience for travellers seeking to connect with the roots of the country. This article explores the significant strides made in the realm of rural tourism in India, with a particular emphasis on the district of Bundi, which stands as a shining example of the potential and success of this sector.

KEYWORDS: Rural tourism, traditional lifestyle, folk art, community driven development

I. INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism in Rajasthan, India, offers a captivating opportunity to delve into the rustic lifestyle and rich cultural heritage of the region. Traveling to rural areas in Rajasthan unveils a myriad of experiences, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in activities such as traditional farming practices, exploring intricate handicrafts, and taking enchanting village walks. The state's rich history, colourful festivals, majestic forts, and opulent palaces make it an ideal destination for rural tourism. Among the prominent examples of rural tourism in Rajasthan is the Shekhawati region, renowned for its exquisite frescoes adorning the havelis (mansions). Exploring these intricately painted architectural marvels allows visitors to witness the region's artistic legacy and experience the grandeur of bygone eras.

Another remarkable rural tourism initiative in Rajasthan is the village of Tilonia. Here, the Barefoot College has garnered international recognition for its remarkable work in empowering rural communities through education and skill development. The college offers training in various vocational skills, including solar energy, handicrafts, and healthcare, with a focus on sustainability and community-driven development. Visitors can witness the transformative impact of grassroots initiatives and engage with local artisans and craftsmen, gaining insight into Bundi's rich cultural heritage.

The scope of rural tourism in Bundi encompasses its diverse and vibrant culture, encompassing folk arts, handicrafts, traditional festivals, and fairs. This unique blend of cultural offerings attracts domestic and international tourists alike, seeking an authentic and immersive experience. According to market research firm Grand View Research, agritourism alone is projected to witness a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 11.4% from 2022 to 2030, highlighting the tremendous potential for rural tourism development in India.

Overall, rural tourism in Bundi presents an enticing avenue for travellers to engage with the local community, gain a deeper understanding of the region's traditions, and contribute to sustainable development.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rural tourism has emerged as a fascinating area of study, drawing attention from researchers around the world. This article highlights some of the notable researchers who have contributed to the field of rural tourism, shedding light on various aspects of this unique form of tourism.

David Airey, a prominent figure in tourism management, has made significant contributions to rural tourism research. His work delves into the cultural and social dimensions of rural tourism development. Airey's studies explore topics such as localism, cultural change, and community participation in rural tourism initiatives. His research emphasizes the need for sustainable practices and the preservation of local traditions and heritage in rural destinations.

Anna Farmaki's research focuses on rural tourism development, with a particular emphasis on Mediterranean regions. Her studies examine the economic, social, and environmental impacts of rural tourism. Farmaki's work highlights the importance of sustainable development, community involvement, and the promotion of local products and services in rural tourism destinations.

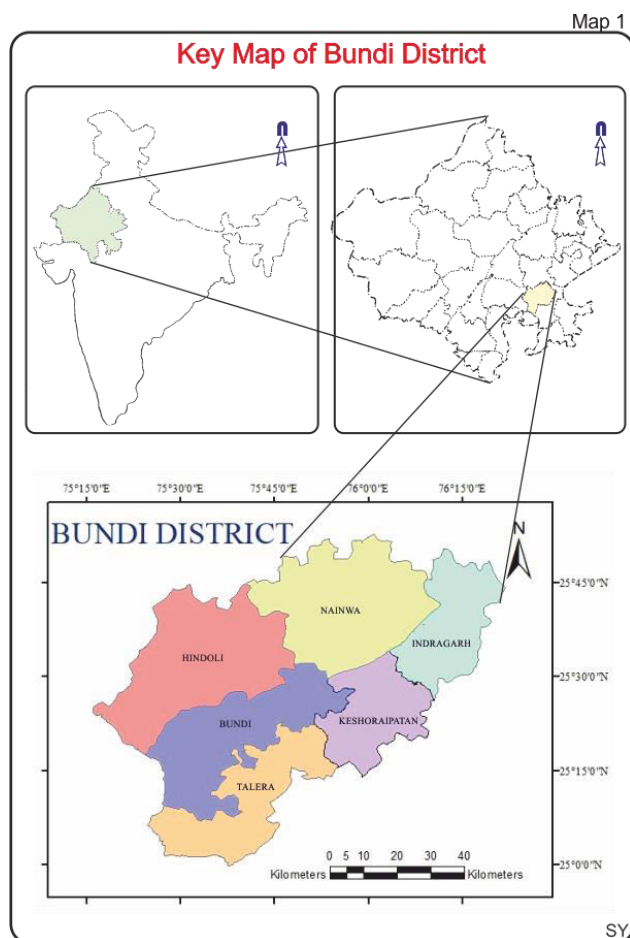
Scott McCabe, an expert in marketing and tourism, has contributed extensively to the understanding of rural tourism experiences. His research explores various aspects, including tourist motivations, experiences, and the marketing strategies employed by rural destinations. McCabe's work emphasizes the significance of authentic and immersive experiences, community engagement, and the positive socio-cultural impacts of rural tourism.

Don Getz's research on rural tourism and community-based tourism has provided valuable insights into destination management and community involvement. His studies emphasize the importance of sustainable development, stakeholder collaboration, and the creation of supportive environments for rural tourism initiatives.

III. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this initiative is to prioritize sustainability and minimize the need for extensive infrastructure development. The primary goal is to involve local resources and communities, creating a distinctive organic experience while simultaneously boosting employment opportunities in rural areas. The Ministry of Tourism is currently working on a budget plan, where certain training modules at the district level will receive 100% funding from the central government, while other aspects will be financed with a split of 60% from the central government and 40% from the state government.

IV. STUDY AREA



The 25° 27' North latitude and 75° 39' East longitude pass through the city of Bundi. It is situated in a valley along a narrow gorge of the Aravalli Hills about 210 km. South of Jaipur, 36 km. East of Kota on the National Highway No.52. The climate of the area is moderate. Average annual temperatures are about 20°C. January is the coldest month with average temperatures of 24.5°C. May is the hottest month when temperature may go up to 46°C. Average annual rainfall is 628 mm of which 90% is during the Monsoon season. Phyllites, shales, slates and quartzites are the common rocks of the area. An alluvial mantle is superimposed on the older rocks in the river valleys. The rest of the area has thin alluvial soils. Natural vegetation comprises of Tropical Deciduous forests which are generally open. Hill slopes are fairly covered with Dhokra (*Anogeissus Latifolia*), Dhau (*Anogeissus Pendula*), Khair (*Acacia Catechu*) and Khejra (*Prosopis Spicigera*). Bundi forests abound in variety of wildlife and provide natural habitat to various animals, birds, and fishes. Agriculture is the main stay of the area with 67% of working population engaged in agriculture and allied activities. Bundi is the transport nodal centre of the district. It has a Broad-Gauge railway station and a State Roadways Bus Terminus. The Television Relay Centre of Bundi has the tallest T.V. tower in the State. Being the district headquarter.



V. ANALYSIS

Tourism refers to the act of traveling for leisure, as well as the industry that caters to tourists and organizes tours. It can be either international or domestic, meaning within one's own country. The World Trade Organization defines tourism as people traveling and staying in places outside their usual environment for various purposes, such as leisure, business, or other reasons, for a period of up to one year.

Rural tourism is a diverse and complex industry that goes beyond agriculture and agricultural tourism. It encompasses various forms of tourism, including farm-based vacations, adventure and eco-tourism, sports, and health-related activities. Examples include hiking, hunting, fishing, rafting, jungle safaris, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and visiting places of historical significance. Rural tourism aims to promote sustainable socio-economic development in rural areas, benefiting farmers and reducing regional inequalities and poverty.

While the concept of rural tourism is not entirely new, there have been significant changes and developments in recent decades. Nowadays, over 70% of Americans engage in rural recreational activities. Rural tourism offers visitors a country experience with a range of attractions and activities. It includes destinations like Rameshwar Mahadev, Bhimlat, Devjhar and Jhar Mahadev, and cultural sites such as Gaindoli, Indergarh and Keshoraipatan. Essential features of rural tourism are open spaces, small-scale tourism development, and the opportunity for visitors to directly connect with rural and natural environments.

Therefore, rural tourism should be practiced in rural areas and reflect the unique characteristics of the rural world. This includes small-scale businesses, the presence of nature and heritage, and the integration of various elements such as the rural environment, economy, history, culture, religion, festivals, and traditional practices. By promoting sustainable development in rural areas, rural tourism aims to improve the well-being of local communities, reduce economic disparities, and contribute to poverty eradication.

Table: Bundi Tourist Inflow

Year	Domestic	Foreign
1981	840	131
1991	2660	344
2001	20847	3994
2012	50788	16523
2013	49434	15739
2014	49925	15063
2015	54574	15290
2016	59864	15420
2017	65021	16442
2018	70442	16534
2019	70946	14610
2020	19022	4186

Source: Tourist Information Centre Bundi

Rural tourism brings several benefits to communities and regions. Firstly, it helps to reduce out-migration by creating attractive opportunities within rural areas, thereby encouraging individuals to stay and contribute to their local communities. Secondly, it opens new avenues for alternative business opportunities, allowing locals to explore entrepreneurial ventures and generate income. This, in turn, contributes to poverty alleviation efforts by providing sustainable livelihood options. Additionally, rural tourism empowers communities by involving them in decision-making processes and fostering a sense of ownership and pride in their cultural heritage. It also promotes the sale of local art and crafts, supporting local artisans and preserving traditional craftsmanship. Lastly, rural tourism plays a crucial role in the preservation of heritage sites, ensuring the conservation of historical and cultural treasures for future generations to appreciate and enjoy.



Challenges for Rural Tourism in Bundi

Rural tourism in Bundi, like many other rural areas in India, faces several challenges that need to be addressed for its successful development. One major challenge is the lack of infrastructure. Bundi, although rich in cultural heritage and natural beauty, often struggles with inadequate roads, limited access to electricity, and insufficient healthcare facilities. These deficiencies can deter tourists from visiting and make it challenging for local communities to provide quality services to visitors.

Another significant hurdle is the limited awareness about rural tourism in Bundi. Many tourists and even local communities may not be fully aware of the potential of rural areas as tourist destinations and the positive impact tourism can have on the local economy. Increasing awareness through effective marketing and educational campaigns is crucial to attract more visitors and involve the local community in tourism development.

The issue of low income and unemployment is also prevalent in Bundi. Like many rural areas, Bundi experiences low-income levels and high unemployment rates, making it challenging for local communities to invest in tourism infrastructure and provide the necessary amenities and services to cater to tourists. Initiatives aimed at skill development, entrepreneurship, and income generation can help address these challenges and create opportunities for the local population.

Ecological preservation is another concern for rural tourism in Bundi. Care must be taken to ensure that tourism activities are sustainable and do not harm the local environment and culture. Proper management and regulation are essential to prevent overcrowding, pollution, and the destruction of natural habitats, which can have long-term negative effects on both the ecology and the attractiveness of the destination.

Safety concerns also need to be addressed in Bundi. The perception of rural areas as unsafe can deter tourists from visiting and enjoying their experience fully. Adequate security arrangements and measures are necessary to create a safe and welcoming environment for visitors, enhancing their overall experience and creating a positive image of Bundi as a tourist destination.

By recognizing and actively working to overcome these challenges, Bundi can unlock its potential as a thriving rural tourism destination, attracting visitors, supporting the local economy, and preserving its rich cultural and natural heritage.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Improve Infrastructure:** The government and relevant authorities should focus on improving infrastructure in Bundi, including roads, electricity, and healthcare facilities. This will enhance the accessibility and convenience for tourists and enable local communities to provide better services.
2. **Increase Awareness:** Effective marketing and promotional campaigns should be undertaken to raise awareness about the potential of Bundi as a rural tourism destination. This can be done through online platforms, travel agencies, and collaborations with tourism organizations. Local communities should also be educated about the benefits of tourism and encouraged to actively participate in its development.
3. **Foster Entrepreneurship:** Initiatives should be implemented to support and encourage entrepreneurship in Bundi. This can include providing training programs, financial assistance, and mentorship to locals interested in starting tourism-related businesses. By fostering entrepreneurship, the local economy can diversify, and new opportunities can be created for income generation.
4. **Sustainable Tourism Practices:** It is crucial to implement sustainable tourism practices in Bundi to preserve its ecological and cultural heritage. This can involve regulating visitor numbers, promoting responsible tourism behaviour, and raising awareness about environmental conservation. Collaboration between tourism authorities, local communities, and environmental organizations is essential in achieving sustainable tourism goals.
5. **Enhance Safety Measures:** Measures should be taken to ensure the safety of tourists in Bundi. This includes improving security arrangements, enhancing law enforcement in tourist areas, and creating a safe and welcoming environment.



environment. Collaboration with local authorities and the establishment of tourist police units can contribute to enhancing safety and building trust among visitors.

VII. CONCLUSION

Rural tourism in Bundi holds immense potential for economic growth, community development, and the preservation of cultural heritage. While challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited awareness, low income, ecological concerns, and safety issues exist, they can be overcome through strategic planning, collaboration, and targeted interventions. By addressing these challenges and implementing the recommended measures, Bundi can emerge as a thriving rural tourism destination that offers unique experiences to visitors while benefiting the local community. With sustained efforts and a commitment to sustainable development, Bundi can harness the power of rural tourism to drive socio-economic progress and create a brighter future for the region. Rural tourism has the potential to bring about a revitalization of local art and crafts, ensuring the preservation of valuable traditional occupations and preventing their displacement. Moreover, it serves as a catalyst for the redevelopment of rural areas and the rejuvenation of rural life, contributing to the creation of jobs and the emergence of new business opportunities.

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