



Development of Community-based Eco-Tourism in Bundelkhand

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Abstract

Tourism industry is the prospective economic sectors to develop Bundelkhand region at a larger rate and make sure of the consequential growth of the infrastructure at the destinations. There are many types of tourism on offer in the world market, with tourism types being as diverse as the kind of experience that the visitor demands. Locations are peculiarly involved in tourism models that fulfill the requirements and aspirations they draw from the tourist industry. Studies and experience, however, have already shown that various tourism systems in Bundelkhand impact a destination's ordinary communities in diverse ways. This paper emphasis on two tourism models in Bundelkhand: ecotourism and community-based tourism. The study reveals that Bundelkhand possesses excellent potential for ecotourism, most of which even today is virgin and unexplored. The paper moreover discusses about natural habitat, cultural heritage in Bundelkhand. In view of the improvements in tourism industry patterns, it concluded with the desired future of ecotourism study.



Keywords: Sustainable development, Sustainable tourism, Ecotourism, Environment, Bundelkhand Tourism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism depends for its very existence on quality natural environments; it is equally dependent on human environments, resources and cultures. The Bundelkhand Community is one aspect of knowing community growth for the growth of tourism, although it is essential to note that how local tourism development is influenced by the community. Bundelkhand's local people play a significant role in the development of tourism since they are essential in providing tourists with a warm environment. A crucial aspect of the modern growth of the tourism industry is local communities. Bundelkhand's local people are the central focus for the provision of accommodation, hospitality, knowledge, transport, amenities and tourism development services.

"Eco-tourism" is really a honestly new concept that has significantly caught many people's interest from a variety of perspectives. It looks to be a catch-all word for different people that have different interpretations. It indicates ecologically sound tourism for some; alternative, acceptable, responsible, legal, green, environmentally sound or



sustainable tourism for others. Despite ongoing controversy over just what eco-tourism means, almost everyone seems to understand that eco-tourism needs to be a tool for natural resource protection. Nature travel, which promotes conservation and sustainable development programs, is eco-tourism in Bundelkhand. [1] Tourism is the enhancement of the material life of the inhabitants, without any loss of conventional structures of jobs, acculturation or social disturbance. [2]

In general terms, nature-based tourism has been claimed to contain three main components:

- First, the nature of the nature-dependent experience, which involves characteristics such as the degree of contact with nature and social sensitivity.
- Secondly, the style of this experience, where different product elements such as willingness to pay, group size and type, and length of stay are considered to be of significance.
- Thirdly, the position of Bundelkhand's nature-based tourism experience, including accessibility, position ownership, as well as the fragility of resources utilized. [3]

Key fundamentals for community based eco-tourism development in Bundelkhand

- Participatory planning and capacity building to strengthen community’s tourism management skills.
- Collaboration and partnership facilitating links to market- to ensure financial viability.
- Establishment of environmental goals- to ensure outcomes is in alignment with community values.
- Focus on generating supplemental income for long-term community sustainability.

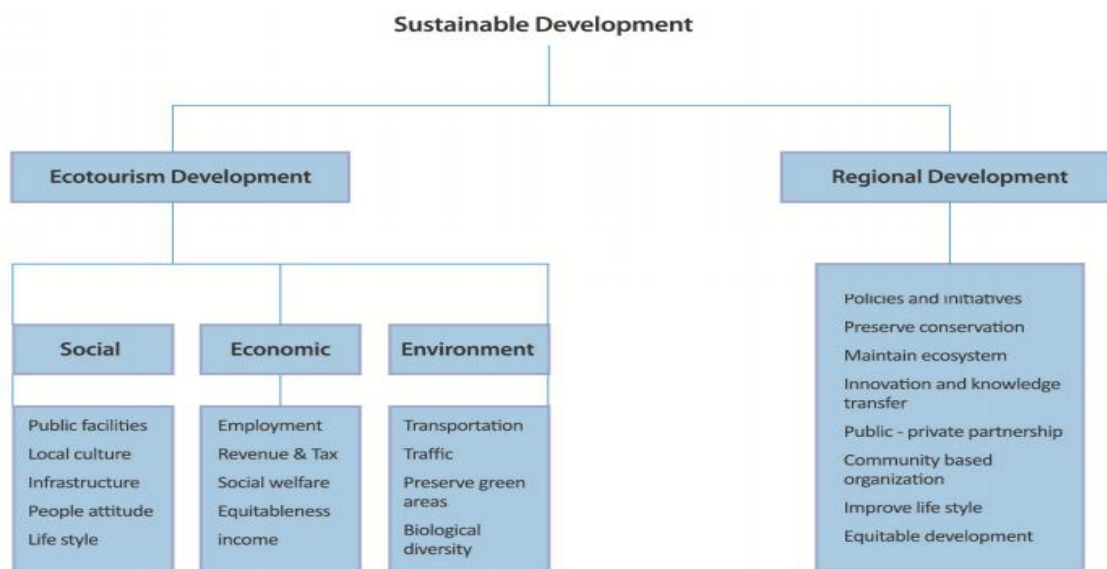


Figure 1 Sustainable development through Ecotourism



Tourism in Bundelkhand has the prosperous potential to motivate other economic continuums through its forward and backward connections with a host of sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, education, transport, banking, health, etc. investment on ecotourism persuades a chain of transactions requiring supply of goods and services from these associated sectors. The demand for consumption, originating from tourist spending, also generates greater jobs and has an increased influence on the economy. As a concern, in the Bundelkhand region, additional revenue, advantages and job opportunities are generated through such links. The growth of the Bundelkhand ecotourism sector can thus contribute to the generation of large-scale jobs and the eradication of poverty. Through the production of tourism in the terms of additional national and state revenues, jobs, company receipts, salaries and salary income, buoyancy in local , state and central tax receipts, the financial advantages that flow into the economy will result in overall socio-economic growth and accelerated economic progress.[2]

II. COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM IN BUNDELKHAND

In order to support local communities, ecotourism includes a combination of preservation and tourism, particularly focusing on sustainability. The concepts of natural and cultural ecosystems form the basis of ecotourism. Ecotourism in the Bundelkhand regions has the power to have a severe effect on local communities, primarily due to the propensity of Eco tourists, opposed to mass tourists, to get a greater knowledge about the culture and nature of the regions they visit. Bundelkhand ecotourism destinations are often environmentally responsive because ecotourism activities specifically include different environmental activities, such as bird watching, hiking, mountaineering, horseback riding and elephant riding, camping in natural caves, seeing flora and fauna, effective bush walking, fishing, observing animal behavior and ecological studies.[1]

In regions such as Bundelkhand, ecotourism often involves different events in nature (hiking, mountaineering, observing living creatures in their natural environment, etc.), but cultural activities may also be included. Bundelkhand ecotourism is a significant educational aspect, it is an opportunity to learn appreciation for nature, for indigenous culture, and for some it is an opportunity for self-reflection encouraged by the glory of the environment.[4]

Development of ecotourism and Wildlife tourism in Bundelkhand

- The Department of Tourism will provide civic and tourist amenities in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries jointly along with Forest Department to ensure visitor satisfaction



- Nature Interpretation Centers, Nature Camps, Boating, Nature Tour Programs etc. shall be organized.
- While encouraging wildlife tourism it shall be ensured that it does not disturb, deteriorate or have any negative impact on the environment.
- Planning for such destinations will be done by engaging the local communities to ensure equitable distribution of benefits and socioeconomic upliftment of the local population.
- Trained eco-tourism guides and naturalists shall be trained and certified in co-ordination with the Forest Department.[5]

With expanding disposable wages, modernized ways of life and better life quality, the recreation and amusement segment in tourism has developed as the greatest fascination for the local traveller lately. Ecotourism in Bundelkhand region for the working class city tenants has turned into an essential getaway from the occupied timetable of urban ways of life. With more studies demonstrating that youngsters are in an ideal situation with quality time spent in guardian's organization, the strata is getting to be more inclined to short yet various occasions. The necessity is advancing around shifting ends of the line alongside moderateness and integration.[6]

Eco-Tourism is a potential asset for making mindfulness for insurance of timberlands and natural life and creating income. It would likewise help create business for youth in different regions, as expected by an alternate senior area official. Bundelkhand is rich with the quantity of Sufi destinations it houses. The National Chambal Sanctuary in Etawah is oceanic creature natural surroundings. Created in 1979 and spread over 435 sq. km, it is among the nation's prime natural life havens. Other than this, a wide fix of wetlands encompassing the area turns into the winter home for transitory winged animals that land here for perching or reproducing.[7]

III. COMMUNITY ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BUNDELKHAND REGION

To develop ecotourism successfully and engage community in the areas of Bundelkhand, it is necessary to understand different attitudes of community members towards its development as their motivations and reactions can affect the ecotourism process. Lately, the crucial role which the rural and local communities play in conserving the biodiversity has been recognized by many conservationists. Hence, involvement of these communities as stakeholders in planning and implementation of ecotourism activities becomes indispensable. In India many ecotourism sites are being managed with the participation of local communities.[8]

Findings suggest that even though a huge amount of domestic and international tourists are not aware of all the tourism activities provided in Bundelkhand, they are fond of these



services and are willing to participate whenever these services are catered. This does not only include their preference to the existing services but shows that tourist interest in new environment friendly tourism services. This would help local communities and ecotourism developers to include other attractions and events or to branch out more appropriate services at Bundelkhand sites. [9]

IV. CULTURAL HERITAGE IN BUNDELKHAND REGION

MP is famous for its archaeological sites and it is also a pilgrimage for almost all the religions. MP is a land of ancient tradition and culture. The UNESCO World Heritage site, Sanchi Stupa near Vidisha is a home of pilgrimage for Buddhists. Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain is one of the major pilgrimage centers of Hindus. The capital city of MP, one of the largest mosques in Asia is in Bhopal. And there are various Jain temples all over the state.

One of numerous popular tourist magnetisms in India, which is also part of the Bundelkhand region, is Khajuraho. The temple walls in Khajuraho are stone-carved with images of love-making. For religious tourism, Satna is however a tourist spots. Ithas was the ancient temple of the Bhawani goddess at a location called Maihar. Thousands of devotees from all over the place the world gather there during Durgapuja to worship the goddess. [12] Datia is famous for its Bundelas-built buildings and palaces, especially that of Virsinghdeo. Datia has often tried to preserve the original culture, language and customs of Bundela. At present, Datia has various theater and literacy groups seeking to conserve and spread its cultural heritage. [11] The Chhatarpur district of Panna is also renowned because of its diamond mines. It is often referred to as the City of Temples. As many as eleven hundred historical temples are said to exist in the district.[6] A popular tourist and religious attraction, Orchha, is located in the Tikamgarh district. In later days, it was the capital of Bundelas until it was transferred to Tikamgarh leading to Orchha's vulnerable strategic position. The Fort and several temples of Orchha provide spectacular views in the backdrop of the river Betwa. Orchha and Datia's buildings are beautiful and share stories of the innovation of the kings of Bundela. Tikamgarh is also spiritually renowned for its temples in the Orchha of Lord Rama and Kundeshwar Mahadeo Mandir, near Tikamgarh Township. [10]

Forests and Animal Resources in Bundelkhand

In Bundelkhand, Panna seems to be the only district with more than 50 percent of the forest area compared to its geographical area. The forest area of Satna and Chhatarpur is about 20-30 percent, while less than 20 percent forest is found in Tikamgarh and Datia. It is a really serious problem to worry about. It should be recognized by government and local people and take the measures to promote the proportion of Bundelkhand forest area.



The problem of soil filling into the ponds and soil erosion rendering them useless, the direct flow of rainwater into the rivers, the depletion of groundwater supplies and the land's unproductivity, all these are the emerging problems in Bundelkhand that have their origins in forest cover degradation. Apart from forest assets, a primary source of livelihood is livestock for the inhabitants of Bundelkhand. The area is renowned for its livestock population, which, apart from oxen for agriculture, other animal supplies milk and other animal products. Forests have been a big cause of livelihood for poor families in Bundelkhand. Although for everything in their lives, tribes were dependent on natural resources, other caste people, especially the Scheduled Caste, were also dependent on it for food. Mahuwa was one of the important sources of protein for poor communities living in rural areas of the district. The significance of Mahuwa in people's lives can be observed if one travels through the district of Bundelkhand between March-April. During those few months, one can feel the fragrance of it all around. The vine, fruit and seed of Mahuwa are all beneficial to poor people's livelihoods.

V. ROLE OF COMMUNITY - BASED ECOTOURISM IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BUNDELKHAND

This region has outstanding ecotourism sites, starting from the world famous Khajuraho temples, Jhansi, the town of Rani of Jhansi with its palaces, Orchha with its many palaces and natural beauty, the religious circuit of Chitrakoot, the National Park at Panna and Bundelkhand which is dotted with a number of forts. Perhaps no other region in India has so many forts and palaces; and places of natural beauty in such a compressed area. While some of these forts have been converted to hotels, there is a huge potential that remains untouched. [13]

Bundelkhand houses two of the nation's most attractive tourist destinations and both remain under developed. The first of these two sites of ecotourism is the Khajuraho cluster, which is synonymous with Indian tourism, both internationally and nationally, and yet the facilities here are not adequate and the average tourist days spent are just one or two. The supporting tourist activities are missing, and the site is unable to attract tourists for more than a few days. The other cluster is around Chitrakoot, one of India's principal centers for religious tourism. Once again, the infrastructure is poor, and there are no facilities for high-spending tourists and almost no supporting activities. The potential in tourism remains unexplored.

Eco-tourism can be planned for the areas around the palaces and forts; coupled with folklore to attract visitors from far and near. Visits to Adivasi villages, rural tourism and home stays are options that need to be encouraged and explored around Khajuraho. Unfortunately, industry-led solutions are likely to be marginal to the development of the region. While policy-led industrial promotion is often advocated by State Governments,



industry is free to choose where it wishes to invest and there are no advantages that will attract industry to the region. Thus, an industry-led promotion strategy cannot be central to any plan for this area. Similarly, knowledge-based service led growth also does not offer much possibility.[14]

Being in the center of India, with good connectivity the second area of promise is developing Bundelkhand region as a logistical hub. If it can generate enough warehousing and transport related infrastructure, its locational advantage can be exploited. Adequate schemes promoting investments in this regard already exist and an aggressive effort to make this a logistic hub can develop this sector substantially.[5]

VI. CHALLENGES IN COMMUNITY BASED ECOTOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN BUNDELKHAND

Major challenges for ecotourism development include:

1. Lack of infrastructure and superstructure to support ecotourism process, although the area has plenty of diverse attractions
2. Maintenance of available infrastructure: Regular maintenance of the infrastructure like repair of roads, sit outs, availability of safe drinking water, power back up and sanitation
3. Lack of funds
4. Lack of adequate publicity and marketing of ecotourism
5. Exceeding carrying capacity
6. Exploitation of tourists
7. Threat to ecology

The region does not have easy connectivity with major tourist hubs like Delhi, Mumbai, and other big cities and air connectivity has been uncertain and limited. The infrastructure required to turn a region into a tourist hub with promoting ecotourism that attracts tourists, both Indian and international, on a sustained basis over a longer period requires planned tourist-related activities and services, which are absent in Bundelkhand. On the other side, religious tourism, for example in Chitrakoot, is organized largely by small hotels with basic facilities (dharmashalas), and caters to religious travellers, without promoting any tourism or entertainment aspect. This is an area that needs to be developed, so as to attract a greater number of visitors (especially those with larger spending capacity) and for a longer length of time.

Moreover, ecotourism as an economic activity may not necessarily be desirable or feasible for every destination or even for every community within a particular destination. As such, it should be recognized for its own merits as a tool and used in tandem with other sustainable income generating activities.[15]



CONCLUSION

As a direct consequence of the world's awareness and response to environmental practices and global environmental practices, the term ecotourism originated in the late 1980s. Evidence indicates that ecotourism should eliminate the 'tourism-centered' syndrome within the environmental management aspect and follow the 'nature-centered' strategy in order to represent sustainability rather than tourism values. Another significant challenge lies in the sustainable monitoring practices of ecotourism components, where the issues of environmental auditing and environmental management systems need to be explored in their full potential. In this paper, all the parameters of ecotourism in Bundelkhand have been discussed. The study reveals that Bundelkhand possesses excellent potential for ecotourism, most of which even today is virgin and unexplored. The major attractions being in terms of pleasure tourism & religious tourism. The area is filled with historical heritage and attracts tourists who are attracted towards the history, monuments and nature. In view of this aggressive investment opportunities and infrastructural development should immediately be deployed to the area and its surrounding communities to achieve the desire objectives of sustainable ecotourism development in Bundelkhand region in India.

Finally, it has become clear that ecotourism is a more complex and interesting area of research with distinct components ranging across a variety of research grounds from marketing to environmental management.

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