THE BENEFITS OF RURAL TOURISM

BENEFICIILE TURISMULUI RURAL

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Abstract: *In the paper bellow I tried to present in a very simple manner the benefits of rural tourism in a certain area, and the advantages that it brings to local communities. I presented the benefits that are mainly financial especially where farming is not always very lucrative, and for the tourists, rural tourism also offers endless opportunities for rafting, horse riding, diving, mountain biking.*

I also presented here how we could rate the Tourist Potential of a Village, the economic and social benefits and environmental benefits that can enhance the reputation of any tourism business.

Key words: *benefits, rural, tourism, tourist, village*

INTRODUCTION

Rural tourism encompasses all tourist activities and recreational experiences that occur in non-urban, populated areas. It offers opportunities for tourists to experience people, events, culture, cuisine and crafts that are not available in cities and larger towns. The concept may be considered to be an off-shoot of Ecotourism - travel that is mindful of the impact it has upon the environment and culture of the destination visited. The year 2002 was declared the International Year of Ecotourism (IYE) by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) and the United nations Environment Program (UNEP).

The WTO has rated Rural Tourism as one of the fastest growing segments in the tourism industry, with an annual growth of 5 per cent worldwide and representing 6 per cent of the world GDP.

RESULTS AND DISCUTION

Benefits to Village Communities

The benefits of rural tourism to local communities are mainly financial, for tourist enterprises offer a viable additional income, if not an alternative, to farming. This is especially true for mountainous regions or deserts where farming is not always very lucrative. In fact, analyses of rural tourism initiatives worldwide indicate that they have benefited some of the poorest countries like Nepal, India and several African nations.

Village crafts people could also benefit from Rural Tourism by increased sales of crafts. For example in India, one of the places developed as a rural tourism destination is Hodka in Gujarat, which is well known for its fine handicrafts. The tour package for Hodka includes visits to crafts villages which would educate visitors about the handicraft as well as offer them the opportunity to buy it.

Opportunities for the Rural Tourist

There are many different ways to enjoy rural tourism, depending on the inclination of the traveler. While some tourists view village holidays simply as a chance to enjoy a slower pace of life in small rural hotels or home stays, others see it as `cultural tourism' – wherein they get to experience village culture, cuisines and crafts up close. For those more physically inclined, rural tourism also offers endless opportunities for rafting, horse riding, diving, mountain biking.

How to Rate the Tourist Potential of a Village

There are unknown and untapped Rural Tourism opportunities all over the world. Here is a rough guide to determine the tourism potential of any given village or rural area.

1. It should have a couple of attractions worth visiting.

2. The local community should be willing to extend hospitality to tourists.

3. The village/region should have a reasonable infrastructure (transport, water, power, rooms) to accommodate a seasonal influx of tourists.

4. Accessibility also determines how popular a place could become. For instance, villages near existing tourist destinations have a greater chance of becoming successful tourist destinations compared to those that are

remote and inaccessible.

Tourism is one of the most effective ways of redistributing wealth, by moving money into local economies from other parts of the country and overseas. It brings income into a community that would otherwise not be earned.

Economic benefits

Economic benefits resulting from tourism can take a number of forms including:

1. Jobs

Employment may be associated directly, such as tour guide or managerial positions; or in supporting industries like food production or retail suppliers.

2. Increased spending

Increased spending in the community generated from visitors or tourism businesses can directly and indirectly promote the viability of local businesses.

3. Economic diversification

Tourism operators can play a role in highlighting the broad prosperity that tourism can bring to a community and will contribute to a greater understanding and respect for the value of tourism.

Economic diversification is, for many communities, an insurance policy against hard times. By offering an additional means of income, tourism can support a community when a traditional industry is under financial pressure, particularly where that community relies heavily on a single industry.

4. Farmers markets

The popularity of farmers' markets is increasing becoming a key driver of economic development in regional areas. Activities such as visits to farms and farmers' markets, fruit picking and agricultural farm accommodation may provide important supplemental activities to struggling rural areas. Some of the benefits of Farmers' Markets seen include:

- showcases local produce and local products
- encourage visitors from other areas
- showcase the local and regional areas
- allows for community events to be incorporated
- provides distribution opportunities for small businesses
- valuable contribution to the economic development of the area as

money is spent locally

5. Infrastructure

Infrastructure including roads, parks, and other public spaces can be developed and improved both for visitors and local residents through increased tourism activity in a region.

Social benefits

Community identity and pride can be generated through tourism. A positive sense of community identity can be reinforced and tourism can encourage local communities to maintain their traditions and identity.

Environmental benefits

Providing financial or in-kind support for the conservation of the local environment and natural resources will enhance the reputation of any tourism business.

Tourism, particularly ecotourism, can place a greater focus on the conservation of natural resources through the recognition of their importance to visitor experiences and their economic value to the local community.

A positive aspect of tourism is that is one of the most labour - intensive industries, so it has the potential to contribute towards job creation and economic development in rural areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Through rural tourism, in addition to financial matters, we can participate in the development area and creating new jobs.

In order to have a quality tourism in our country, we still have to work on infrastructure, training people from rural area, etc..

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