

India's Village Transformation: A Sustainable Tourism Model for 2047

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Abstract

India's village transformation through sustainable tourism is a vital initiative for achieving the country's vision for 2047. It is one of the world's largest "smoke free" industries and fastest growing service sectors. It has made a multiplier impact on the economy, brought both positive benefits and negative detriment on people's lives and on environment. Traditionally, India is rich in culture and tradition, which promotes cultural tourism, supported by its historical- archeological sites which attract the attention of foreign tourists who adore the history and archeology of India. In the last few decades, different forms of tourism have emerged, and a few such forms are: pilgrimage tourism, agri tourism, adventure tourism, medical tourism, heritage tourism, rural tourism, eco-tourism and so on. Rural tourism is primarily concerned with protection of natural environment, cultures and local resources. It could also serve as means to achieve economic development by enabling village people who live in rural mosaic to make use of the economic non-use values derived from natural environment.. The Sustainable tourism and rural tourism are largely dependent. How rural tourism promotes rural villages by making use of the local resources rather than exploiting, how local communities are exhibiting their culture and traditions in order to create economic benefits without causing much damage to the local society. in the sense that it aims to attain mental and physical happiness by enjoying and experiencing the beauty of natural environmental assets. With this background, the authors have made an attempt to provide a theoretical framework for the sustainable development via village transformation, the authors conclude that rural tourism village spots and sites could attract both foreign and domestic tourists accrue in terms of benefits derived from village-tourism.

Keywords: Village Tourism, Rural Tourism, Model villages, positive and negative benefits

1. Introduction

India's philosophy of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" sees the world as one family. Diversity in language, culture, religion, traditional practices and resources of the states are united in tourism and create India as a self-reliant and empowering nation. G 20 presidency emerges as a transformative compound for the travel and tourism sector. Dharamshala Declaration in 2020 asserts that sustainable and responsible tourism contributes to global tourism via domestic/local tourism. Aatmanirbhar Bharat is call to become vocal for local. Draft of National Tourism Policy 2022 with a holistic vision to achieve USD 1 trillion by tourism in 2047. Dharamshala Declaration affirms the plan to position India as a major tourism destination during its presidency of G-20 next year (Naresh K Thakur, 2022).

The G20 summit brought over a lakh of delegates from the world in over 60 meetings across country. Which exposed the culture, diversity, Heritage Sites and India's rich treasures for art, music, and multi cuisine boost tourism sector at global level. Prime Minister Modi addressed in September, in 105th Mann Ki Baat, Tourism is the sector which generates 'Maximum Employment with minimum investment'. (Dharmendra Kumar, 2023). The theme for National Tourism Day 2023 is "Rural and Community Centric Tourism" the essence of Aatmanirbhar Bharat to realize the fullest potential of Indian Tourism. The potentiality of Indian tourism lies in many forms of tourism, medical, village tourism, pilgrimage/spiritual tourism, emerging MICE tourism, yoga tourism etc. Identification and promotion of local/village tourism builds the strong nations at wide. It is a responsibility of all citizens of Indian to promote local tourism and local tourism products to reach at global level.

Tourism Villages: An Initiative UN Tourism

The Best Tourism Village (BTV) by UNWTO initiative launched in 2021, under the UN Tourism for rural development programme to accelerates the role of tourism in Rural development by valuing and safeguarding rural area destination with recognized culture, natural assets and to encourage the rural community participation in producing value-based products a clear commitment to innovation and sustainability across economic, social and environmental dimensions. BTV initiative supports high potential villages to meet the recognition and helps to improve in areas identified as weakness during evaluation. This villages are assessed by an independent advisory board under nine areas of evaluation they are cultural and natural resources, promotion, and conservation of cultural values, economics, sustainability, social sustainability, environmental sustainability, tourism development and value chain, integration, governance and prioritization, infrastructure, and connectivity and health, safety and security. Best Tourism Villages (BTV) recognizes the villages which have clear commitment to sustainability in all aspects-economic-social-and environmental.

Table :1 Global Best Tourism Villages

S.No	State	Year	Village	Specialization
1.	Telangana	2021	Pochampally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famous traditionally hand woven IKAT products, threads and colours come together in the hands of skilled weavers. IKAT involves 18 steps sequence of tying and dyeing Saree was granted Worldwide Intellectual Property Protection in 2005 known as Geographical Indication (GI)
2.	Gujarat	2023	Dhordo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rann Utsav a special festival where special tent city was created Displays natural and cultural resources/products Tourists are learning the art of making The state-initiated heritage tourism policy to promote tourism Bhungas continued to stand strong even after devastating earthquake

Source: UNWTO

Village/ Local Tourism

To promote tourism to the Soul of India (India's villages), the Best Tourism Villages Competition was introduced in 2023. It is the initiative by UN Tourism to make tourism as a positive force for transformation of village/ rural development and wellbeing of the communities. In order to safeguard villages along with the resources, landscapes, indigenous knowledge system, cultural and ecological diversity, local value system practices tourism village competition assist the villages. The first edition of the BTV competition in 2023 received applications from 795 villages in second edition of BTV competition, a total of 991 applications of which 36 villages were recognized.

Table 1
Best Tourism Village Competition in India -Awarded Villages 2023 and 2024

S. No.	State	Village	Category	Year
1.	Jammu & Kashmir	Dawar	Gold	2023
		Aru	Adventure Tourism	2024
2.	Kerala	Kanthalloor	Gold	2023
		Kumarakom	Agri Tourism	2024
		Kadalundi	Responsible Tourism	
3.	Madhya Pradesh	Madla	Gold	2023
		Pranpur	Craft	2024
		Sabarvani	Responsible Tourism	
		Ladpura Khas	Responsible Tourism	
4.	Mizoram	Reiek	Gold	2023
		Sialsuk	Community Based Tourism	2024
5.	Uttarakhand	Sarmoli	Gold	2023
		Harsil	Vibrant Village	2024
		Gunji	Vibrant Village	
		Jakhol	Adventure Tourism	
		Supi	Agri Tourism	
6.	Andhra Pradesh	Lepakshi	Silver	2023
		Ahobilam	Spiritual And Wellness	2024
7.	Arunachal Pradesh	Shergaon	Silver	
8.	Uttar Pradesh	Kurauana	Silver	2023
		Pura Mahadev	Heritage	2024
9.	Chhattisgarh	Sarodhadadar	Silver	
		Dhudmaras	Adventure Tourism	
		Chitrakote	Community Based Tourism	
10.	Ladakh	Hemis	Silver	2023
		Tar Village	Responsible Tourism	2024
11.	Lakshadweep	Kalpeni	Silver	2023
		Minicoy Island	Community Based Tourism	2024
12.	Gujarat	Khijadia	Silver	2023
		Hafeshwar	Heritage	2024

13.	Odisha	Raghurajpur	Silver	2023
		Maniabandha	Craft	2024
14.	Rajasthan	Menar	Silver	2023
		Deomali	Community Based Tourism	2024
15.	Telangana	Pembarthy	Silver	2023
		Chandlapur	Bronze	
		Nirmal	Craft	2024
		Somasila	Spiritual And Wellness	
16.	Haryana	Talao	Bronze	2023
17.	Himachal Pradesh	Chhitkul	Bronze	2023
18.	Jharkhand	McCluskieganj	Bronze	2023
19.		Rikhiapeth	Spiritual And Wellness	2024
20.	Karnataka	Hampi	Bronze	2023
21.		Kuthlur	Adventure Tourism	2024
22.	Madhya Pradesh	Khokhara	Bronze	2023
		Karde	Agri Tourism	2024
23.	Maharashtra	Patgaon	Bronze	2023
24.	Meghalaya	Kongthong	Bronze	2023
		Umden	Craft	2024
		Mawphlang	Heritage	
25.	Nagaland	Diezephe	Bronze	2023
26.	Puducherry	Thirunallar	Bronze	2023
27.	Punjab	Nawanpind Sardaran	Bronze	2023
		Hansali	Agri Tourism	2024
28.	Rajasthan	Naurangabad-Shree Mahaveerji	Bronze	2023
		Deomali	Community Based Tourism	2024
29.	Sikkim	Kitam	Bronze	
30.	Tamil Nadu	Vettaikaranpudur	Bronze	2023
		Ullada	Bronze	
		Keeladi	Heritage	2024
		Melkalingam Patti	Spiritual And Wellness	
31.	Tripura	Vidyasagar	Bronze	2023
		Alpana Gram	Community Based Tourism	2024
32.	West Bengal	Kiriteswari	Bronze	2023
		Baranagar	Agri Tourism	2024
33.	Assam	Biswanath Ghat	Bronze	
34.	Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu	Devka	Bronze	2023
		Dudhani	Responsible Tourism	2024
35.	Goa	Cotigao	Bronze	2023

		Bandora	Spiritual And Wellness	2024
36.	Assam	Sualkuchi	Craft	2024
37.	Manipur	Andro	Heritage	2024

Source: Compiled by author from tourism.gov.in

The Objectives

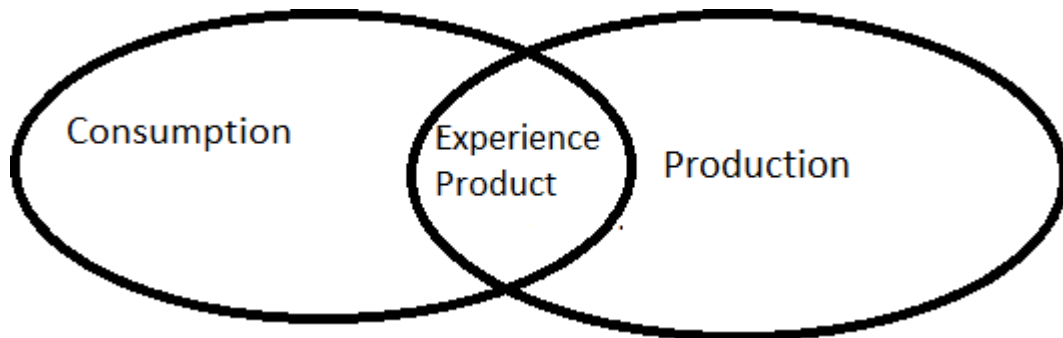
- To study the importance of rural/village tourism in India;
- To identify the push factors of rural/village tourism; and
- To explore the opportunities to establish “Brand India” in promoting Local/ village tourism in Tamil Nadu.

Significance of the Study

Good number of studies have conducted in rural tourism at different levels in India. The research studies pertaining to village level tourism and local tourism are very much limited in case of Tamil Nadu. Hence to fill this gap the present study is taken up.

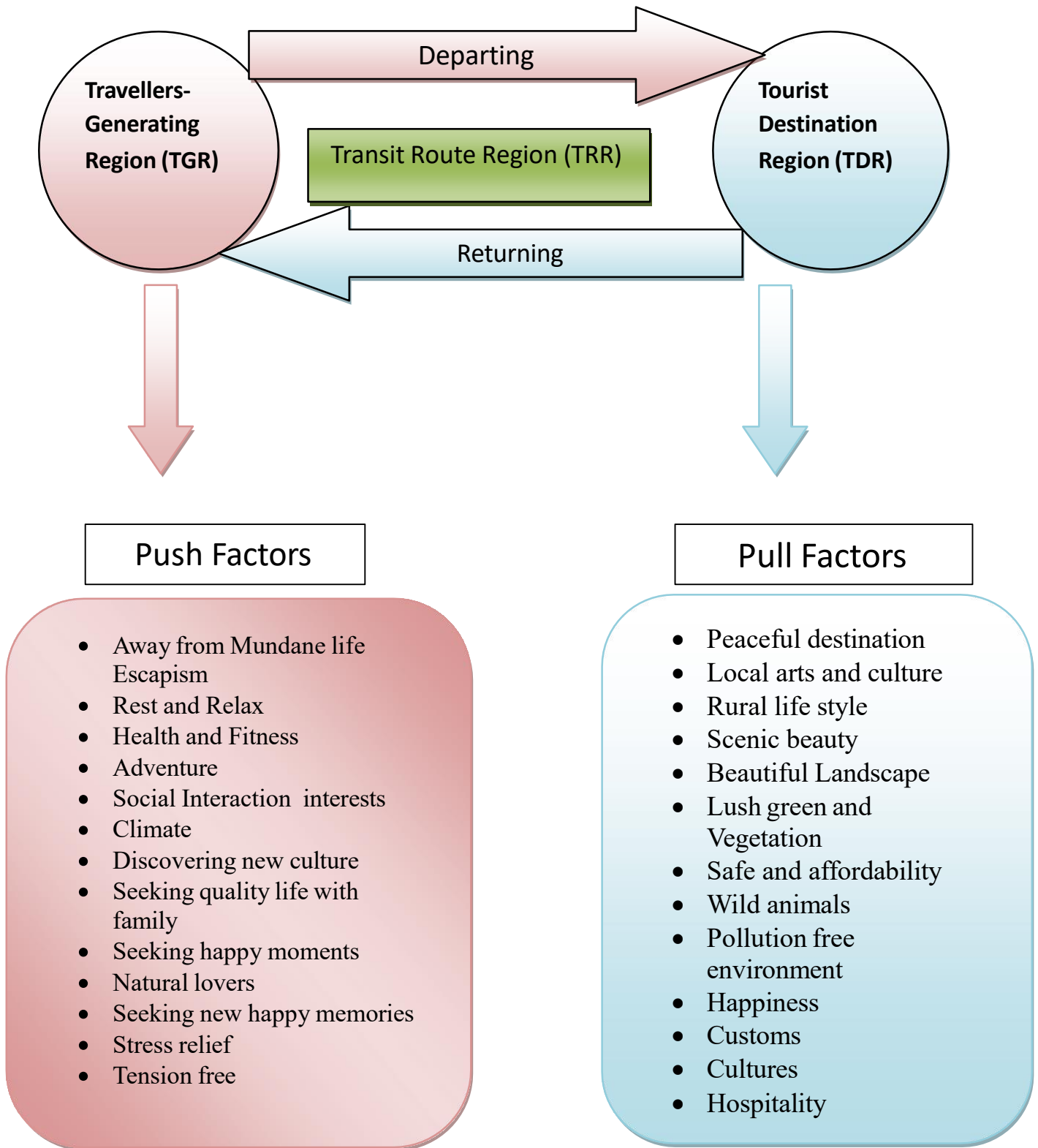
Rural Tourism System

Rural tourism integrates social, cultural economical, and local resources for the development of rural community. Rural tourism is closely associated with local resources and which may closely associated with agriculture and its allied activities. Rural areas tend to be associated with more traditional industry or having standardised secondary business that support more innovative areas (Landabaso, 1999). World Tourism day 2025 celebrated under the theme of Tourism and Sustainable Transformation, where it highlights tourism’s transformative potential as an agent of positive change. One of the key characteristics of tourism is that the main location at which the consumption of experiences occurs is outside of the home environment of the purchaser. The essential characteristics of services are that they cannot be produced without the agreement and cooperation of the consumer and that the outputs produced are not separate entities that exist independently of the producers or consumers (Hill 2009). Consumption cannot occur without production and vice versa. The inseparability of consumption and production also means that the factors that make up consumption and production are constantly feeding back on one another, thereby influencing the development of tourism products and their appeal to consumers. The mobile nature of services is an important dimension in understanding the tourist experience. Travellers Generating Regions (TGRs) are consuming tourism products from the Tourist Destination Region (TDR). Similarly the Tourist Destination Region are producing Tourism products for visitors from Travellers Generating Regions.

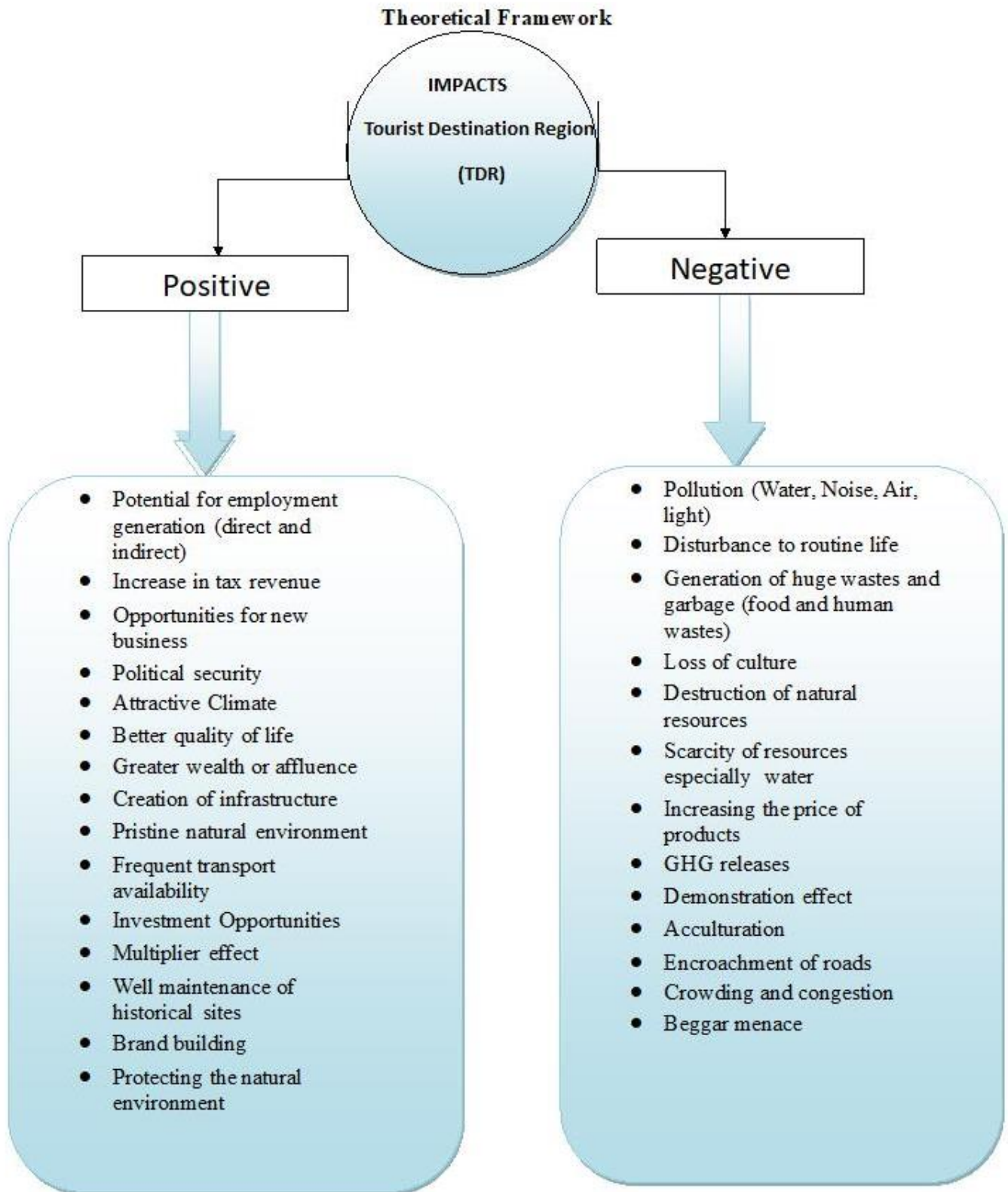


Tourism system consists of consumption and production and experiences that are generated. A generating or source region is the permanent residence of the tourist and the place where the journey begins and ends. A Transit Route is the path through the region across which the tourist must travel to reach his or her destination. A destination Region is the region which the tourist chooses to visit and which is a core element of tourism. The environment surrounds the other three regions. Destination is the focal point of tourism activity; tourism will have affects overall elements of the tourism system. Destinations are accessible to tourism source regions. In relation to travel to the destination, different elements of the system will have different productive components even though they are used by the same consumer.

Basic Tourism System



Source: Adapted from Leiper 1995



Source: Compiled by authors from different sources

Gandhian Concept of Village Development

The word SWARAJ is a sacred word, a vedic word meaning self- rule and self-restraint and not freedom from all restraint. Real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. Gandhiji emphasized the importance of promoting handicrafts and renewable energy resources to create employment opportunities and to improve the quality of life for rural communities. Gandhiji's ideas of Gram Vikas are seen as a holistic idea to rural development encompassing social, economic and environmental aspects, keeping this concept in mind the research paper taken care on these three aspects as a base for sustainable development via village tourism development.

Literature Review:

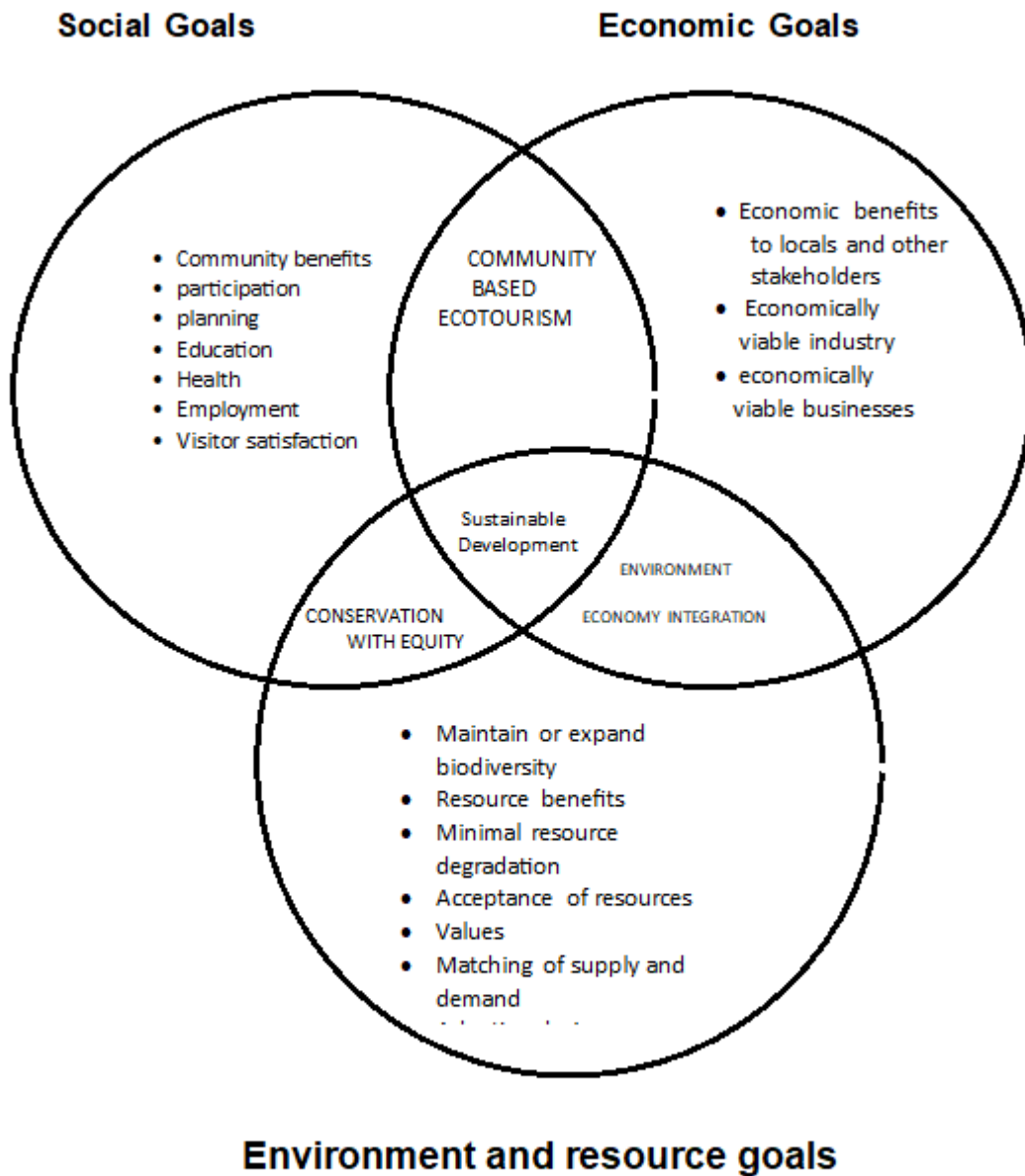
Tourism village should preserve the local customs, safeguard the environment and have a positive impact on its surroundings. The success of a tourist village shall have a multiplier effect in the form of higher rural communities' welfare, increased revenue from tourism sector. (**Istiqomah et al (2020)**). Rural tourism has been widely recognized as a means of promoting the revival of traditional villages. The primary objective of rural tourism is to prioritize the preservation of community values with strong participation of community (**Yanan et al 2024**), the study reveals that rural tourism positively revitalization of rural industries, ecology, culture, talent and organisation (**Wang and Lu (2025)**), collaboration dynamics in CSR practices and integrate emerging technologies to better promote and manage sustainable tourism villages (**Hendrayani et al 2025**), interactions between the government, the tourism industry, universities, media, society and the environment in the management and utilization of tourist villages (**Buchari 2024**), village tourism has the potential to enhance the local economy, preserves cultural heritage and ensure sustainability, several villages in Indonesia suffer from a lack of visibility, poor marketing strategies (**Wahyuni et al 2025**) Development of tourism villages has enormous potential where its success depends upon various factors including community participation, government support and good resource management. Tourism villages offer a unique and authentic tourism experience, it has potential for local culture/customs which attracts more tourists (**Sayuti et al 2024**), Community involvement, co-creative experience making and storytelling are besides the customary involvement. Tourism- a service-oriented industry has emerged as a revolutionizing phenomenon, especially in the second half of the present century. The term 'smokeless' industry has become a cliché, but it is doing all manufacturing industry does namely, generating income, creating employment and distributing wealth etc, Tourism industry in general, increases the foreign exchange earnings and promotes socio, cultural political and economic relations on the one hand and on the other it causes environmental problems such as creating pollution spoiling atmosphere, degrading environmental values, bringing externality, depleting the marine and forest ecosystem, debilitating flora and fauna, jeopardizing valuable species, importing dangerous virus and diseases causing agents, producing over crowd and creating litter and solid wastes contaminating all natural resources. While tourism provides considerable economic benefits for many countries, regions and communities, its rapid expansion can also be responsible for adverse environmental, as well as socio-cultural impact. Though tourism has emerged in different forms like, pilgrimage, Adventure, rural, responsible, Leisure, Cruise, Business, Culture, Educational, Sports and Ecotourism, over the past two decades, rural tourism has gained its popularity. Tourism is promising by improving local community life quality by alleviating poverty, broadening information access, improving facilities and infrastructure. It encourages many communities to initiate and tin local scale tourism (**Suryani et al 2020**). It is an ultimate aim of the Tourist Destination Region to reduce negative impacts and to promote positive impacts in the destination area.

The negative impacts can be evaded by joining hands with the responsible tourists, community/ stakeholders and the government.

Sustainable Development

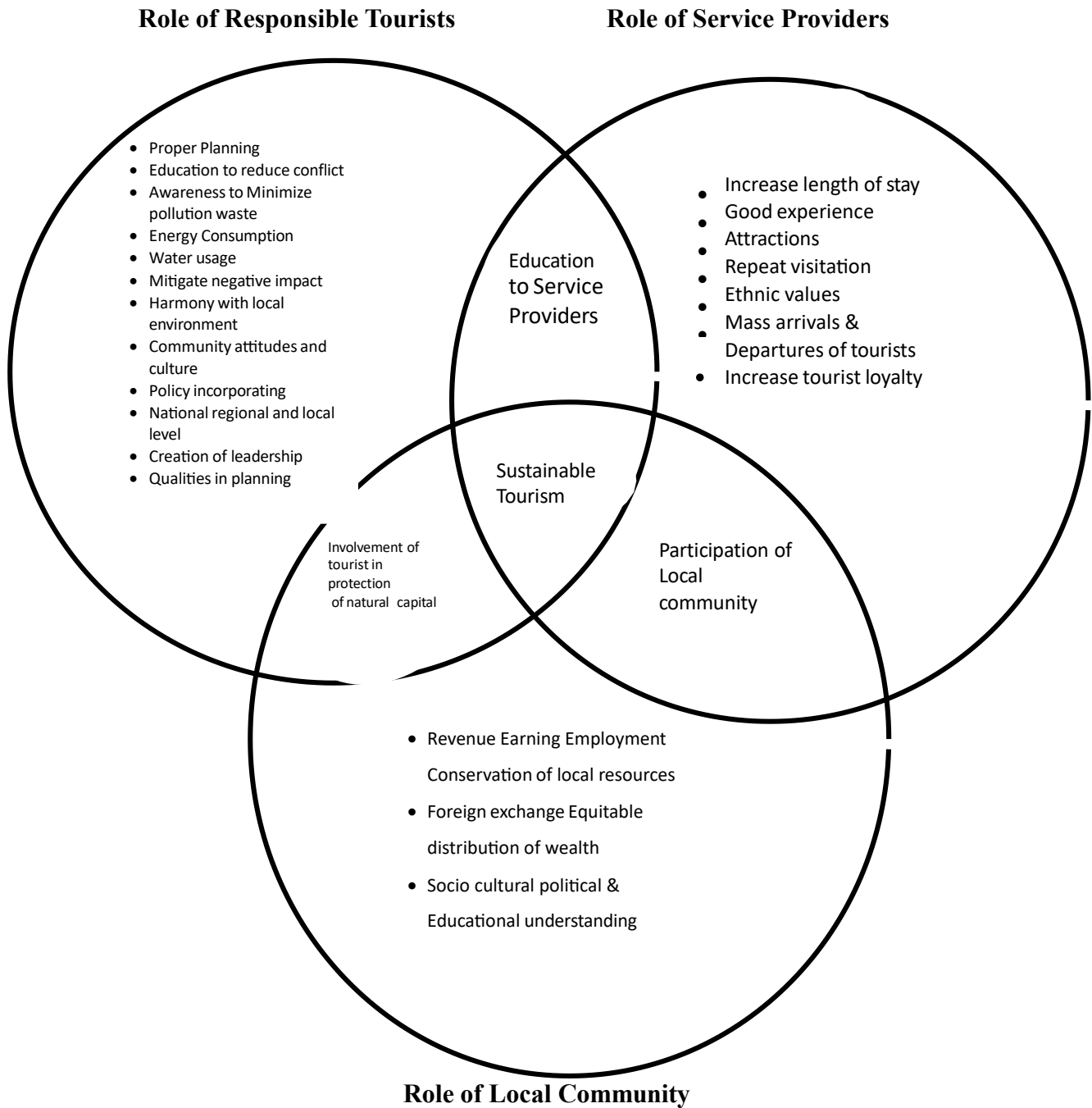
Sustainable Development can provide a viable economic development alternative for local communities. Rural/ village tourism increases the level of education and activism among travelers making them more enthusiastic. Rural tourism protect parks and other natural areas, to attract more tourists (Pallavi Gupta). In general Sustainability is defined as the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs”. In tourism industry idea of sustainability relates the three elements; the tourists, the place/local community and the Service Providers. The influence of these three elements is different but interrelated. This shows in the figure 1.

Figure 1. Sustainable tourism principles and values



. **Source:** Levent Altinay et.al

Figure: 2. Three Dimensional approaches to attain Sustainable Tourism



Source: Compiled by authors from different sources

Conclusion

Gandhiji firmly believed that villagers can make great progress if they work in cooperation with one another. Role of government is to involve local people/stakeholders in framing tourism policies pertaining to the state to meet the needs of stakeholders and address their concerns. Community participation in village tourism development along with responsible tourists may pave a way to build strong foundation to sustainable tourism. Gandhiji suggested Village is the basic institution of participatory democracy, village has to be small enough to permit everyone to participate directly in the decision making process.

Sustainable Tourism hinges inter- intra relationship between the three elements, local community, tourists and service providers. When there is an active involvement of local community, education to service providers and participation of tourists which leads to bring social benefits to the local community, to satisfy the psychological benefits of tourists and create economic benefits to local community and service providers. The Societal benefits bring mass changes in planning, Education, creating awareness to environmental problems, preserve ethical values and create the leadership qualities among the people which brings proper planning. The Economic Benefits generated by the service providers and local community by rendering services, this will satisfy the psychological needs of tourists, increase the length of stay, getting good experience, loyalty increase repeat visitation of tourists generated benefits the local people in the form of getting employment opportunities, improving standard of living. These benefits pave the way for sustainable Tourism Development.

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