

2023

Social Tourism Entrepreneurship as tool for Development of rural areas: a case study of Himalayan region of Jammu & Kashmir, India

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Recommended Citation

wani, basith nabi reseach scholar and rania, Danish iqbal Dr (2023) "Social Tourism Entrepreneurship as tool for Development of rural areas: a case study of Himalayan region of Jammu & Kashmir, India,"

Journal of Tourism Insights: Vol. 13: Iss. 1, Article 4.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.9707/2328-0824.1312>

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Introduction

One of the most important and rapidly expanding sectors nowadays is tourism. Since the tourist industry is expanding quickly, there is a need for new alternative forms of tourism, such as small-scale, rural "experience" tourism that is focused on nature (Moutinho et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship is not a new idea; the phrase is credited to economist Richard Cantillon of the 18th century, who used it to define someone who took on risk, developed plans, organised, and held factors of production such as land, labour, and money (Coulter, 2001). The term "rural tourism" refers to a variety of attractions and activities that take place in rural or agricultural areas and is sometimes referred to as the "country experience. There are possibilities for tourists to directly experience agricultural and natural landscapes, wide-open areas, and low levels of tourism development as some of its important traits. Rural tourism is nothing new, but until the middle of the 20th century, it was mostly the preserve of the wealthy and privileged as a chance to get away from boredom and the industrialised world. Since then, more people have travelled to rural areas as a result of tourism. The rural environment and nearby rural settlements, with their unique cultures and ways of life, are becoming more popular as tourist attractions (Alberta & Irshad, 2010). An entrepreneur is defined as a person who either develops new production combinations, is willing to take risks, organises or reorganises social and economic mechanisms, or eliminates supply and demand imbalances by taking advantage of market opportunities. Another definition of an entrepreneur is a person who owns and runs a business (Barnett, 2015). According to The Theory of Economic Development (1911), innovation serves as the main driving force behind entrepreneurship as the economy develops. According to him, an entrepreneur is an innovator who implements unique innovations, such as the introduction of a new good or quality of a good, the introduction of a new production method that hasn't been previously done in the industry, the opening of a new market, the use of a new supply source, and the

implementation of new organisational structures for the industry (Schumpeter et al., 2017). According to Stevenson and Skillern (2006), social entrepreneurs, who are praised as society's "agents of change" and see social issues as possibilities, are in charge of this activity (Dees, 1998). Entrepreneurship has become more and more significant in the tourism industry. Finding new sources of income and options for entrepreneurs is crucial since they may play a crucial role in the development of rural communities. Unquestionably, entrepreneurial enterprises contribute to the economic well-being of the country as well as the host community. They create a large number of goods and services. As a result, their overall economic output is comparable to that of large corporations. The economy depends heavily on entrepreneurs, who increase possibilities. Women and minorities have significant economic potential in entrepreneurship. Women's and minority-owned start-ups have become much more prevalent in recent years. In order to develop the rural tourism sector, it is important to relate it to the field of entrepreneurship as one of the strategies in the development of rural tourism (Komppula, 2014; Surugiu, 2009). Entrepreneurship and rural development go hand in hand. Entrepreneurship and rural development go hand in hand more than ever.

Objectives of study:

The present study attempts to explore the current scenario of rural tourist destinations. The objectives framed for this purpose are listed as follows:

- To explore the potential of rural tourism in the Kashmir Valley
- To know the current level of entrepreneurial activities at rural tourist destinations in the Kashmir Valley
- To evaluate the socio-economic profile of the host communities through rural tourism
- To look at how entrepreneurship in rural tourism can help raise the economic level of the host

- To put forth suggestions for improving the rural tourism enterprise in Kashmir.

Review of Literature

Entrepreneurship is now viewed by organisations and individuals working to advance rural development as a strategic development intervention that might quicken the process (Petrin 1994). "Rural entrepreneurial activity contributes to economic network diversification and reduces reliance on mono-production." It can provide a wider range of services, raising the standard of living in these places. As a result, entrepreneurship is an excellent approach to providing chances for professional advancement, social and economic integration, maintaining the population of rural areas, and luring new inhabitants to these areas (Gómez-Araujo 2012; Bryden & Hart 2005). An excellent approach to carrying out these duties and improving the human capital of young people in rural regions is entrepreneurship. It provides an environment in which young people can actively participate in their community, contribute their talents and future goals, and cultivate a sense of loyalty and connection to their local communities (Chigunta, 2002; Lyngdoh, 2005). Rural entrepreneurship helps to reduce poverty by generating employment through the establishment of new businesses or the growth of existing ones. This, in turn, increases social wealth by generating new markets, industries, technologies, institutional forms, jobs, and net increases in real productivity and income, which lead to improvements in the population's standard of living (Ali & Ali, 2013). Therefore, it is viewed as a catalyst that can solve all issues related to economic development, social inequality, and job creation. The number of tourism-related business owners is growing in many developing nations, which is assisting the government in bolstering and strengthening SMIs, which might lower unemployment rates in the local community and help alleviate poverty (Surugiu, 2009; Fons et al., 2011). Rural

development, which is implemented in rural regions where the bulk of those living in poverty reside, strives to enhance livelihoods. As a result, it can also help to lessen urban poverty by preventing unchecked migration from rural regions (JICA Research Institute, 2015). In order to improve the quality of life in rural regions, rural development refers to the process of creating and exploiting natural human resources, technology, infrastructural facilities, institutions, and organisations (Jha & Jha 2008). The best way to end poverty everywhere on the globe is to promote entrepreneurial development, which will help businesses grow and launch new enterprises (Singer, 2006). Rural entrepreneurship is labour-intensive and provides a significant number of job options to the host community. The rising issue of rural underemployment and widespread unemployment is clearly addressed by rural entrepreneurship. Rural entrepreneurship has a great deal of potential to develop industrial units in rural regions, creating jobs and money. Unemployed people who participate in entrepreneurial development programmes might choose to work for themselves (Sudipta, 2013). The tourism industry is made up of several business sectors that provide travellers with varied services. The term "tourism business" also refers to the transportation sector, the lodging sector, the tour operators and travel sector, the food and advertising sector, the entertainment sector, the zoo entertainment sector, the concert, theatre, and gaming sectors, the business of organising conventions and business meetings, and the businesses that manufacture and sell travel-related goods (Uriely et al., 2002). However, it generates new employment possibilities and contributes to economic sustainability. Entrepreneurship and the establishment of new businesses are crucial to the development and maintenance of regional products like foods, cuisines, handicrafts, and hand-woven textiles, as well as local cultural events, which create employment by involving people in various means of earning. The degree of affluence and material comfort that an individual or society has access to is typically characterised as the standard of living. In terms

of the economy, it refers to the degree of prosperity and material comfort that an individual or group has access to. In order to raise the standard of living of rural residents through innovations, it is therefore important to promote rural entrepreneurship growth (Adetola, 2016). Rural entrepreneurship has the potential to raise rural residents' literacy rates. Since families may take their children to school and the prospect of social infrastructure enhancement increases with increased money and material comfort, their self-employment and education will benefit the neighbourhood, raising everyone's standard of living. Through the creation of jobs, entrepreneurship increases income and purchasing power, which are then used for consumer expenditures. Industrial activity is boosted by rising consumer demand for goods and services. Economies of scale and cheap manufacturing costs will arise from large-scale production. It has been discovered that entrepreneurial activities may have a favourable influence on the economy of a country and the standard of living of its citizens (Adejumo, 2001). The importance of entrepreneurship to economic development and prosperity is well acknowledged (Imafidon 2014), and it has a favourable correlation with the promotion of economic growth, the creation of jobs, and the empowerment of the underprivileged population, which includes women and the poor. Although it is a relatively new field of study, rural entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the most important enabling elements for rural economic growth. Kushalakshi and Raghurama (2012) contend that rural entrepreneurship promotes balanced regional economic growth by limiting industrial concentration in urban areas (Kushalakshi & Raghurama, 2012). Successful entrepreneurship development programmes can aid in attaining balanced regional development by establishing small-scale firms in distant locations. Entrepreneurs in rural areas are constantly on the lookout for new possibilities. As a result, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in rural development by reducing imbalances and disparities in development among regions. They set up their businesses in areas that aren't as developed by

taking advantage of government concessions, subsidies, and facilities. Therefore, it is clear that rural tourism is crucial to raising society's economic standing and fostering a more sustainable way of life. The growth of tourism benefits rural areas by reducing the emigration of the local population, promoting local arts and crafts, eliminating gender discrimination and other social categories, and improving social and cultural existence. Increased local employment and self-employment; development opportunities in the unorganised sector; Formation of alliances between the governmental and corporate sectors; NGOs; and regional communities.

Rural tourism in the Kashmir valley

Kashmir is known for its youthfully folded mountains, deep gorges, waterfalls, cascades, scenic splendour, and alpine meadows. Its lush green forests, abundant wildlife, snowcapped mountains, deep gorges, enormous glaciers, abundant fishing opportunities, lofty skiing opportunities, carpets of green grass, perennial rivers, gushing fountains, floating gardens in Dal Lake, hissing springs, cool breezes, shimmering lakes, energising climate, apple-almond orchards, saffron fields, and benevolent and kind people are well-known throughout the world. Thus, the Kashmir Valley's primary economic activity is tourism. A significant portion of the state's workforce—about 20%—is also directly or indirectly reliant on the tourist industry, which has grown to be one of the biggest service sectors in the world. Large sites, picturesque places, and a variety of tourist attractions are all present in Kashmir. As an agricultural community, Kashmir may use tourism as a tool for rural development. The paths to success for rural development and rural tourism can be facilitated by one another. In turn, this might expand and diversify the rural economy (Shodhganga 2014).

Potential rural tourism areas in the Kashmir valley

Chatpal Village (Anantnag District): It is one of Kashmir's most stunning offbeat tourist locations. It is situated in Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district. Beautiful expanses of grass surrounded by woodlands; shepherds and graziers bursting with innocence; the brisk and occasionally sluggish river with the absence of highways; lush forests, deep green mountains, and an active, occasionally languid river are all sights to behold. It is a hidden gem of tranquilly and seclusion.

Reshwari/Bangus (Kupwara Districts): Lurking in the shadows One of Kashmir's least visited tourist sites is Bangus. Located in the picturesque Kupwara District, lies the Bangus Valley. If one stares at Bangus Valley, the stark beauty of this heaven's sights and sounds is evident. One of the most beautiful places on earth, it is cradled in gorgeous and lush vegetation and wildlife. The majestic and magnificent mountain ridges that are mirrored in the joyful streams of Tilwan Kul, Douda Kul, and Roshan Kul are as breathtaking as the forests.

Doodhpatri (Budgam District): Doodhpatri is made up of the twin meadows of Parhacemaidan and Doodhpatri. The inexorable rush of the Shaliganga and Sokhnag rivers can be felt on either side of the pastures. Doodhpatri, commonly known as the "Valley of Milk" because of its flowing white rivers, is located in Budgam district, 40 kilometres from Srinagar. West of Doodhpatri is where you'll find the renowned Tosamaidan. Tangnar, Mujpathar, Dophkhal, Sochilpathar, Palmaidan, and Parihas are the main draws of Doodhpatri.

Daksum (Anantnag District): The Mughal Gardens of Achabal are located behind the Bhringi River, which is where Daksum Valley is. Daksum has plenty to offer everyone, including scenic beauty for artists, mountains for thrill seekers, picnic pleasure and fun for families, and fun for couples. There is never a dull moment in coniferous woods, secret green meadows, or icy mountains. The breathtaking splendour of Daksum Valley may be seen for miles. The large, dark

coniferous trees end when the brighter green meadows start. Without actually seeing the Daksum Valley, it is quite impossible to express the colours and contrasts that may be observed there. Visitors enjoy the natural springs' beauty and the way of life in the local communities.

Baisaran (anatnag): A striking meadow known as Baisaran is about 5 kilometres from Pahalgam and is nicknamed "Mini Switzerland" because of its lengthy, dark meadows that resemble those in Switzerland. It is used by hikers going to Tulian Lake as a camping location. There are a few other stops at various well-known tourist attractions en route to Baisaran, including Kanimarg, Pahalgam Old Village, Kashmir Valley Point, Dabyan, and Deon Valley Point. From there, we can get sweeping views of the Lidder Valley and Pahalgam town.

Karnah (Kupwara District): Karnah, a tiny, lovely valley with lush green meadows and sloping mountain peaks, is situated in the Kupwara region of Jammu and Kashmir. The Karnah Valley is charming because it has many little mediaeval settlements. Karnah village's forts, palaces, statues, weapons, and utensils, which were discovered here during excavation, serve as time capsules for the past. Slopes covered with deodar give off a picture-perfect appearance. You will be transported to another realm of happiness by the atmosphere and natural beauty of several villages, including Tangdar, Teethwal, Gundi Gujran, Amrohi, and Saidpur. The snow-capped mountain ranges of Qazi Nag and Nanga Parvat further enhance Karnah's natural splendour. The locals here come from several ancient civilizations with a five-thousand-year history. Visitors enjoy the splendour of the local natural springs.

Watlab (Baramulla): Watlab, one of the lesser-known tourist destinations in Kashmir, is notable for housing the Muslim shrine of Baba Shukurddin, one of the Sufi saint Nundresi's four students, atop a hilltop. It combines natural beauty with a hint of mysticism. This location still exudes a Baba Shukurddin vibe. Baba

Shakur-Ud-Din Wali's birthday is observed on Jamadi-us-Saini, the 27th day of the Islamic calendar month. From the top of the hill, one can see the mesmerising views of Wular Lake, one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes, and the paddy fields' golden-green hues. It's also a fantastic place for birdwatchers since Watlab is home to unusual species including Himalayan Golden Eagles, Himalayan Monal, Rock Doves, Barn Shallow, and others. The region is also home to a diverse range of animal and plant species. Watlab viewing is made more exciting with engaging activities like bird watching, fishing, and shikara rides.

The Gurezz valley, which is located 123 kilometres (km) from Srinagar and 86 kilometres (km) from Bandipore, is encircled by snow-covered mountains and emanates a brilliant view due to the Kishanganga River's presence in the valley. This valley, one of Kashmir's most amazing tourist destinations, is home to a tiny population of rare animals, including snow leopards and brown bears. However, the picturesque settings, the lush greenery of the forests, fishing in the Kishen Ganga River, and the fields of potatoes and maize each have their own special pleasures. Endless woods cling from the valley floor to the heights. The hypnotic beauty of Habba Khatoon Peak provides travellers with a delightful experience.

Lolab (Kupwara): Lolab Valley, sometimes referred to as the Lola is o Ka 's most tranquil and peaceful. Lolab is more well-known than the other locations, and it is known for its picturesque apple orchards, lake, springs, and shady paddy fields. The three mysterious valleys that make up Lolab are known as Kalaroos Valley, Potnai Valley, and Brunai Valley. Photographers will enjoy the beautiful splendour of Nagmarg Meadows, which divides Bandipora District from Lolab. The presence of the Lahwal River provides travellers with a captivating vista. The sage Kashyap rests in a hamlet named Lalpur. The visual splendour makes tourists tune into this wonderful village's tranquilly and spirituality.

Rangmarg (District Baramulla): Rangmarg in north Kashmir's Tangmarg region is an unusual but equally stunning location surrounded by dense woodland and verdant meadows. The best path is about 3 kilometres from Drung to this little-known location. Rangmarg in rural Kashmir The place is fully blessed with picturesque beauty and dense forest.

Gogaldara (District Baramulla): Gogaldara is a stunning round-shaped residential community located around 15 kilometres to the southwest of Tangmarg. This location is tucked away behind the foothills of a mountain known as Doumkoot in the neighbourhood and is situated inside the Pir Panchal Range. This location is well known for its hiking path from Gogaldara to Doumkoot, which offers an exciting, educational, and enlightening way to see and explore this lovely valley. One can see the entire Tangmarg from the mountain's summit, and on the other hand, a green meadow that resembles a bowl which adds this location's breath-taking beauty.

Ahrabal (Kulgam district): The name "Niagara Falls of Kashmir" is apt given the overwhelming grandeur of Aharbal, which is situated on the River Veshav, 49 KM away from Srinagar. The tranquil surroundings and the rumbling of the powerful white water rushing through are like nature's rhythms, which combine to form a pool of still, azure-blue water after the 25-metre plunge. This one provides everything for everyone, with adjacent fishing spots and trekking options, and it promises to enthrall not just nature lovers but also passionate photographers.

The Mughal Road and Pir ki Gali: The Mughal Road started at Shopian and connects the valley to other peeppanjhal regions like Ponch and Rajouri. The Mughal Road is an alternative route to the Kashmir Valley that has shortened the journey for residents of the Rajouri and Poonch districts. The Mughal Road is 84 kilometres long from Bafiaz to Shopian, 55 kilometres from Srinagar, and 40 kilometres from Shopian. It also connects with beautiful locations, including

Dubjan, Aliabad Sari, Talimarg, Dungimarg, and Nagha Pahad, which are quite alluring places, along with Peer Gali.

Materials and methods:

To achieve the formulated objective of the study, the prime focus has been on the survey research design, and an exploratory study design has also been employed for dwelling on the secondary sources of data. Various journals, magazines, books, and manuals have been used for studying secondary information and establishing a detailed theoretical framework. A well-structured questionnaire has been used for gathering first-hand and actual information from the host communities about the existence and actual information from the selected rural tourist destinations. The selected rural tourist destinations using simple random sampling at these selected destinations, 20 respondents from each destination were asked for their responses. The five-point Likert scale was used for getting the responses; the questionnaire was closed-ended and used for the study. So, 200 questionnaires were administered to these selected respondents, but only 189 were found fit for further analysis. The data thus acquired has been analysed to arrive at results that satisfy the study.

Results and Discussion:

After acquiring the required responses from 189 respondents belonging to the host communities at the selected rural tourist destinations and analysing the data, the results obtained are discussed in this section. Most of the respondents were from the age group 36–45, i.e., exactly 40.21 of the total respondents, and the least number of respondents were above 45 years of age. The majority of the respondents, i.e., 66.13 percent of the respondents, were males. Most of the respondents were graduates and constituted about 29.10% of the total respondents. Moreover, a major portion of the locals are unemployed, as we found in our sample that about 34.39% of the respondents were unemployed. But most of them

are farmers, businessmen, or employed, whether in the government or private sector. The current status of the businesses operating at these selected destinations and their effects on the local communities have been examined as follows:

Adequate Availability of Shops: The number of shops operating in the areas When asked if the number of shops at the tourist destination is satisfactory or not, most of them, i.e., 64%, strongly disagreed. Almost 9% strongly agreed, 17% agreed, and 10% disagreed. The overall mean rating for the responses of all the respondents was found to be 1.7 on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represents strongly disagreeing and 4 represents strongly agreeing. Hence, it can be inferred that the number of shops operating in the selected areas is not satisfactory, or, in simpler words, there are not many shops in these areas (TABLE 1; Fig. 1).

Table 1 Adequate Availability of Shops

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
17 (8.99 %)	32 (16.9 %)	19 (10.05 %)	121 (64.02 %)	1.7

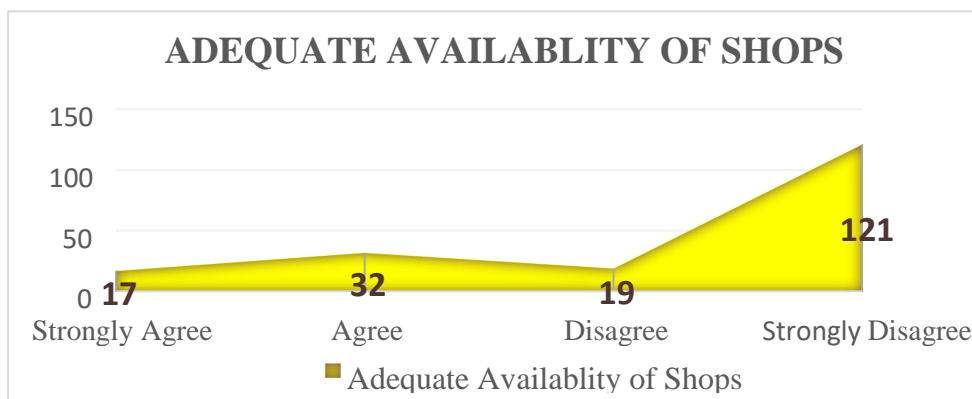


Fig. 1 Adequate Availability of Shops

Adequate Availability of Hotels and Lodging Facilities: When asked if they were satisfied with the number of hotels and lodging facilities, 57.67% strongly disagreed. Around 15% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, and 13% disagreed with the statement, leading to a mean rating of 1.86 on the scale of 1 to 4. This indicates that the number of lodging facilities and hotels at the selected places is not satisfactory (Table 2; Fig. 2).

Table 2 Adequate Availability of Hotels and Lodging Facilities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
29 (15.34 %)	26 (13.7 %)	25 (13.22 %)	109 (57.67 %)	1.86



Fig. 2 Adequate Availability of Hotels and Lodging Facilities

Adequate number of restaurants or dining facilities: The responses of the respondents about the number of restaurants being satisfactory did not vary significantly, and most of them, i.e., around 71 percent, strongly disagreed with the statement. Around 8% strongly agreed, 10% agreed, and 11% disagreed. The

overall mean rating of the responses came out to be 1.55 on a scale of 1 to 10. Hence, it can be inferred that there are no significant dining places or restaurants at these rural tourist destinations in the Kashmir valley (Table 3; Fig. 3).

Table 3 Adequate number of Restaurants or Dining Facilities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
16 (8.4 %)	18 (9.5 %)	21 (11.11 %)	134 (70.89 %)	1.55

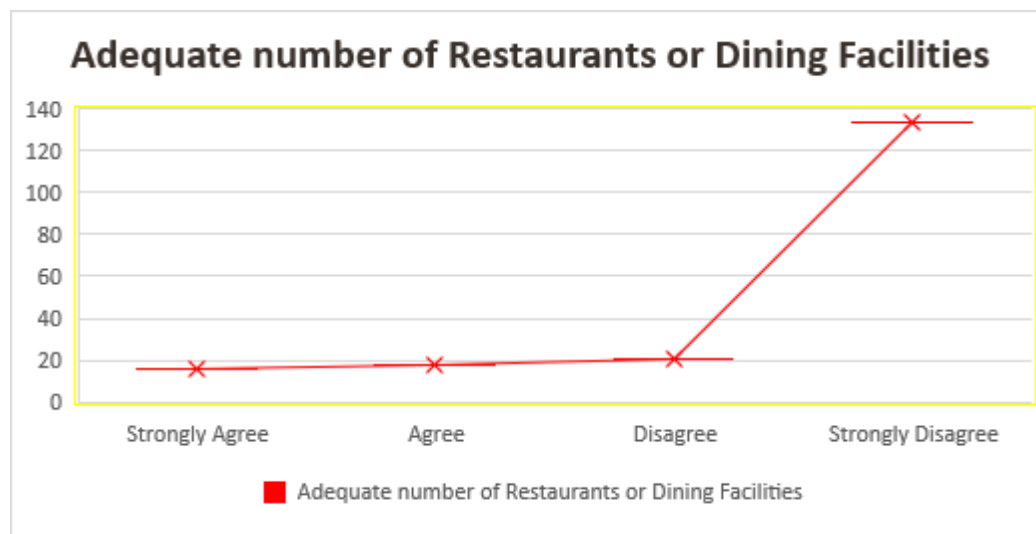


Fig. 3 Adequate number of Restaurants or Dining Facilities

Sufficient Tourism Enterprises at the Destinations: When asked about the number of businesses operating at these tourist destinations, respondents indicated a scarcity of such businesses. Most of the respondents, i.e., 70.3% strongly disagreed, around 18% disagreed, 8% agreed, and 4% strongly agreed to the statement "There are many business enterprises operating at the destination." The overall mean rating for the responses was found to be 1.44, which indicates that the responses tend to strongly disagree. So, it's safe to assume that there aren't a lot of businesses in the chosen tourist spots (Table 4; Fig. 4).

Table 4 Sufficient Tourism Enterprises

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
7 (3.7 %)	15 (7.9 %)	34 (17.9 %)	133 (70.3 %)	1.44

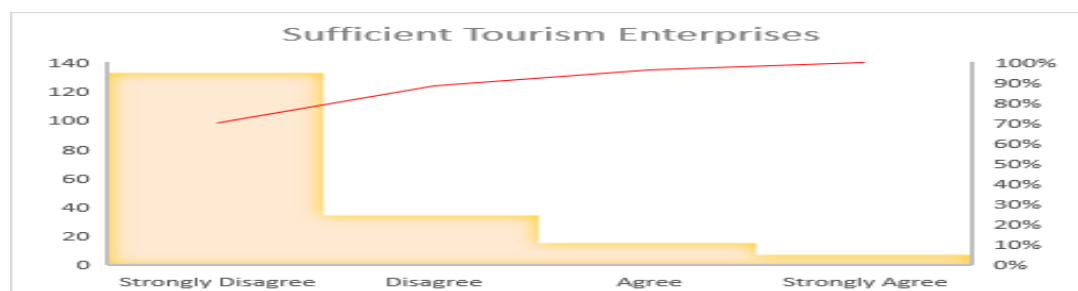


Fig. 4 Sufficient Tourism Enterprises

Infrastructure at these destinations: The responses of the locals pertaining to the infrastructure of these destinations show a disagreement once again, with the overall mean ratings of the responses being 1.82 on a scale of 1 to 4. 47.08% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement "The infrastructure is well

developed and well maintained," while around 22% disagreed, 16% agreed, and 14% strongly agreed. Hence, it can be rightly claimed that the infrastructure like roads, electricity, and water facilities at these destinations is not significantly developed and maintained. (Table 5; Fig. 5).

Table 5 Adequate Infrastructure

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
27 (14.2 %)	31 (16.4 %)	42 (22.22 %)	89 (47.08 %)	1.82

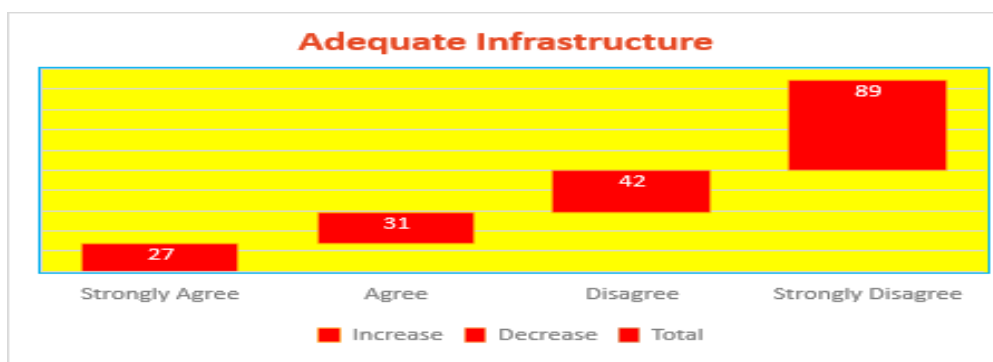


Fig. 5 Adequate Infrastructure

Ancillary services and amenities: In the case of the quality and adequacy of the ancillary and amenity services at these destinations, the locals were asked if "the ancillary services and amenities are satisfactory." The responses of the local people at these destinations had a mean rating of 1.76 on the scale of 1 to 4, which indicates that the responses are concentrated between strong disagreement and disagreement but tend more towards strong disagreement. So, it can be inferred

that the ancillary services and amenities at these destinations are not satisfactory (Table 6; Fig. 6).

Table 6 Satisfactory Ancillary Services

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
10 (5.2 %)	34 (17.9 %)	46 (24.33 %)	99 (52.38 %)	1.76

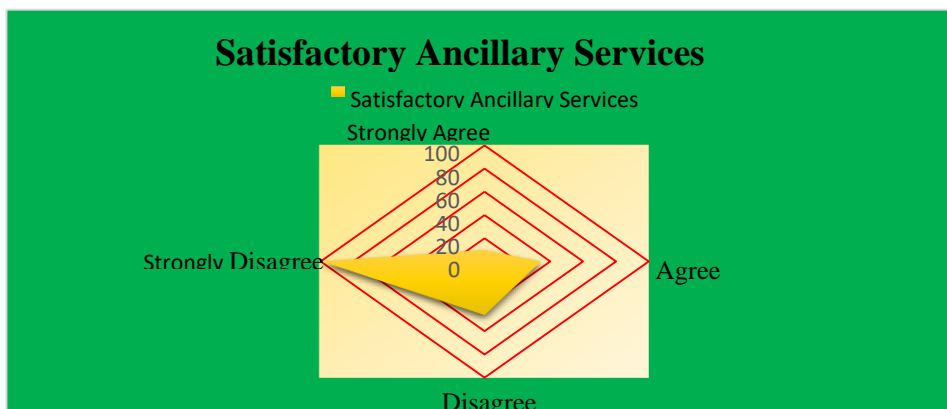


Fig. 6 Satisfactory Ancillary Services

Employment opportunities for the local community: The businesses operating at these places are supposed to be providing employment opportunities to the local people. Keeping in view the role of tourism entrepreneurs at these places and the expectations of the locals in this regard, the locals were asked whether "there are

adequate employment opportunities for local people." The majority of the respondents, i.e., 57.6% of them, strongly agreed, while 23.8% agreed, 13.7% disagreed, and only 4.7% strongly disagreed. The overall mean rating of the responses was found to be 3.34 on the scale of 1 to 4, indicating that most of the responses tend to strongly agree. Hence, it can be inferred that there are enough employment opportunities for the local communities in the business enterprises at these destinations (Table 7; Fig. 7)

Table 7 Adequate Employment Opportunities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
109 (57.6 %)	45 (23.8 %)	26 (13.7 %)	9 (4.7 %)	3.34

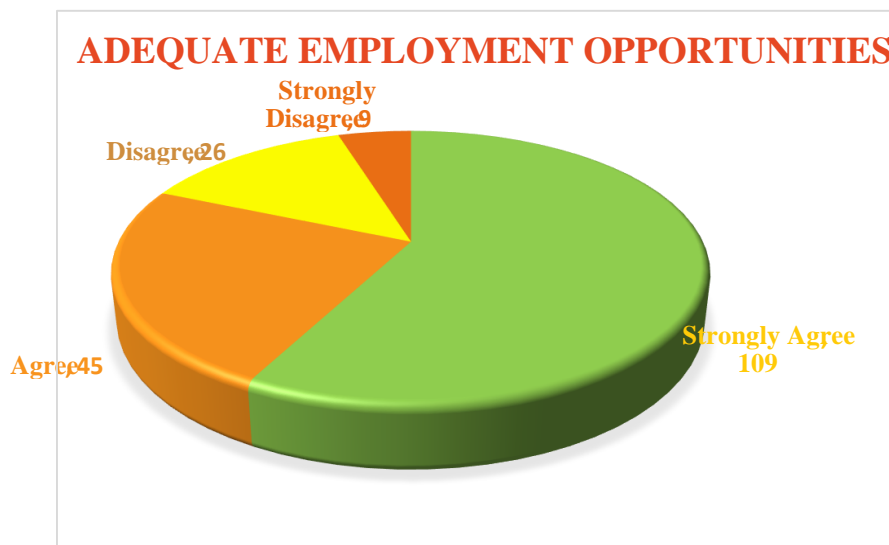


Fig. 7 Adequate Employment Opportunities

Employment generated: Apart from the significant opportunities anticipated by locals, in order to know how many of them have been actually employed in these businesses till now, the respondents were asked to respond to the statement "Many local people have been employed in the enterprises at the destination." A large majority of respondents, 66.13, strongly agreed with the statement; 23.2% agreed, and only 10.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with it. So, it is clear that many people have been employed by these rural tourism entrepreneurs in the past (Table 8; Fig. 8).

Table 8 Significant Employment Generated

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
125 (66.13 %)	44 (23.2 %)	13 (6.8 %)	7 (3.7 %)	3.51

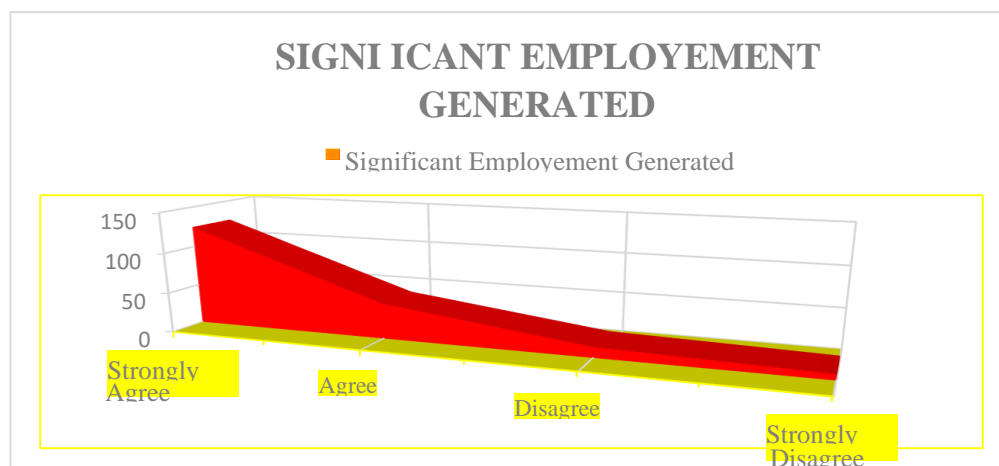


Fig. 8 Significant Employment Generated

Business opportunities for the local community: Alongside providing employment, the businesses operating at these places should also be creating business opportunities for the locals. And in this regard, the respondents were asked whether "there are many business opportunities for local people." Almost 77.6% of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement, and 18% agreed to it. Just 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Hence, it can be inferred that the rural tourism entrepreneurs provide adequate business opportunities for the locals at these rural tourist destinations (Table 9; Fig. 9).

Table 9 Adequate Business Opportunities

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
145 (76.7 %)	34 (17.9 %)	7 (3.7 %)	3 (1.5 %)	3.69

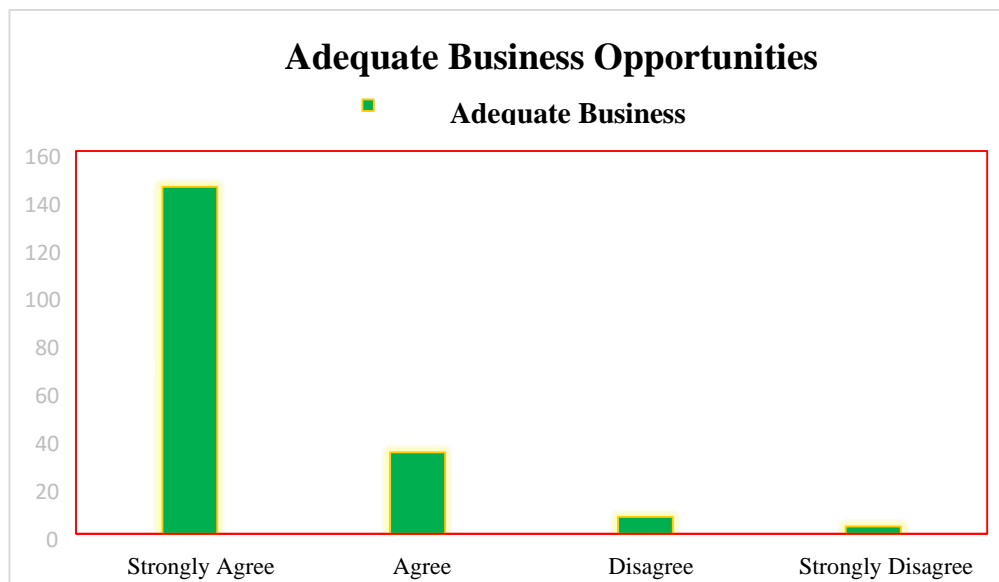


Fig. 9 Adequate Business Opportunities

Income level and living standard: By providing employment and business opportunities to the host communities, the rural tourism entrepreneurs contribute to enhancing their income levels and living standards as well. The mean ratings of the responses of the locals when asked if "the general living standards and income levels have improved due to the entrepreneurial activities" were found to be 3.37 on a scale of 1 to 4, which indicates that most of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement. Hence, it can be inferred that these rural tourism enterprises have significantly improved the living standards and income levels of the host communities (Table 10; Fig. 10).

Table.10 Improvements in Income Levels and Living Standards

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
101 (53.4 %)	68 (35.9 %)	9 (4.7 %)	11 (5.8 %)	3.37

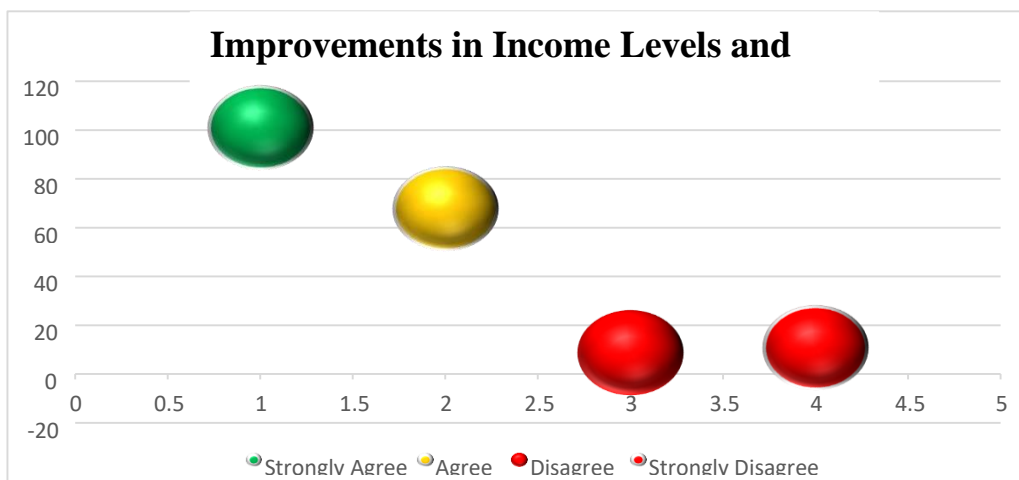


Fig. 10 Improvements in Income Levels and Living Standards

Preservation of Cultural Heritage: There is always a risk of cultural erosion when conducting routine business and interacting with host communities. It becomes a moral responsibility for these rural tourism entrepreneurs to make efforts to preserve the cultural heritage of that very destination. They must not only try to preserve the local culture but also represent it to others through their products, services, and strategies. The responses of the local people when asked whether "the enterprises operating here preserve and represent the cultural heritage of the place" yielded a mean rating of 2.84 on a scale of 1 to 4, which indicates that most of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement. Hence, it can be inferred that these rural tourism enterprises make efforts to

preserve the cultural heritage of the destination and represent it through their businesses (Table 11; Fig. 11).

Table 11 Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
44 (23.2 %)	95 (50.2 %)	27 (14.2 %)	23 (12.1 %)	2.84

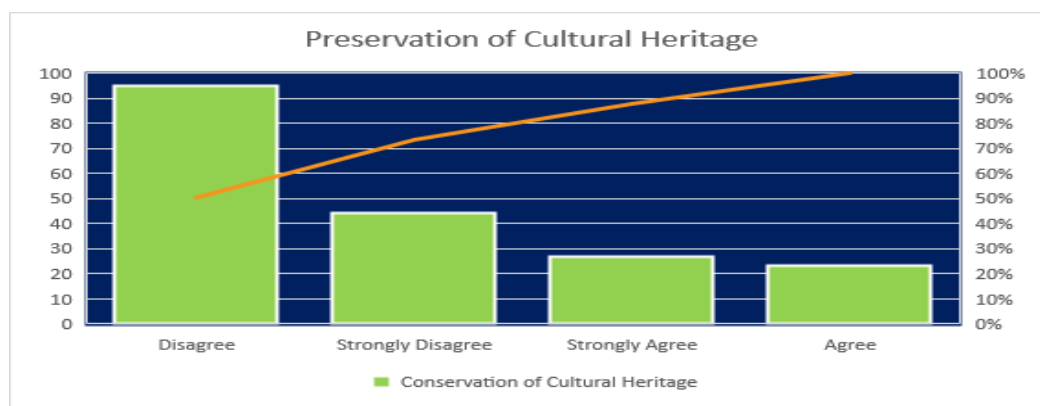


Fig. 11 Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Waste Management: The enterprises in the course of business at rural tourist destinations produce waste of various kinds, which is extremely harmful for the environment. It is once again the moral responsibility to manage the industrial waste so as to safeguard the environment at the destination. The respondents, when asked whether "the waste and disposals are managed effectively," responded positively, and around 66% agreed with the statement, and another 17% strongly agreed. The overall mean rating of the responses is found to be 2.94, indicating that most of the respondents think that these businesses effectively

manage their waste and protect the environment from its dangerous effects (Table 12; Fig. 12).

Table 12 Effective Waste Management

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
33 (17.4 %)	124 (65.6 %)	20 (10.5 %)	12 (6.3 %)	2.94

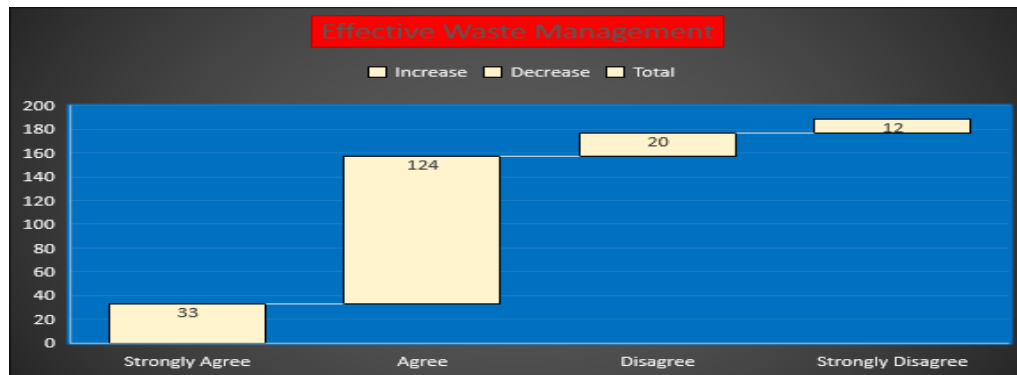


Fig.12 Effective Waste Management

Migration of local people to urban areas: People living in rural areas always tend to migrate to cities and urban areas so as to have better facilities and opportunities. One of the prime benefits of rural entrepreneurship is the reduction in the migration of people by developing the destination. The respondents, when asked whether "the migration of local people to urban areas has been reduced," responded positively, and around 46 percent agreed with the statement, and

another 21 percent strongly agreed. On a scale from 1 to 4, the average rating of the answers is 2.72, which shows that the rural tourism businesses at these destinations have made it less likely for local people to move away (Table 13; Fig. 13).

Table 13 Reduction in Migration to urban areas

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
41 (21.6 %)	88 (46.56 %)	27 (14.2 %)	33 (17.4 %)	2.72

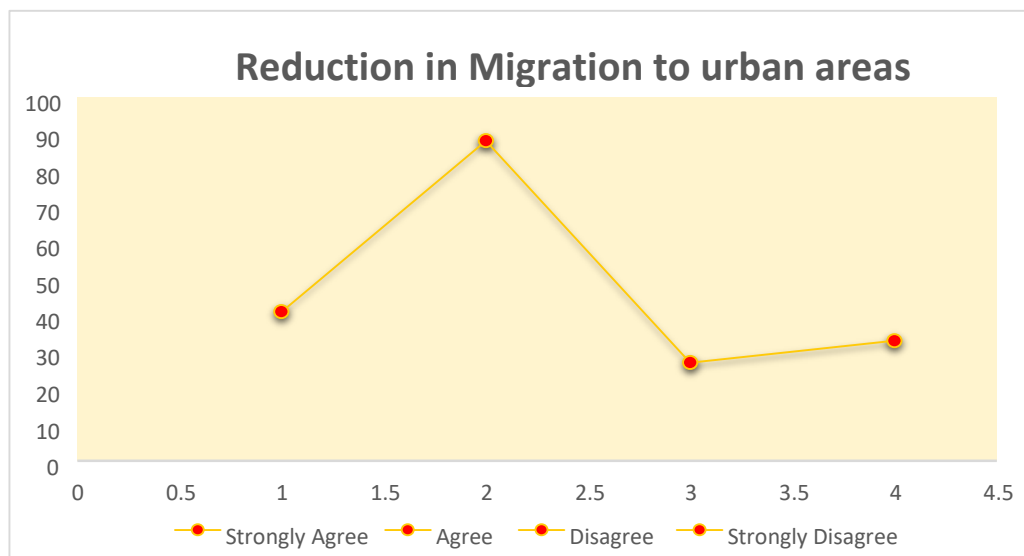


Fig. 13 Reduction in Migration to urban areas

Utilisation of local resources: Every rural tourist destination has resources that can be used for business purposes and, if not used properly, can go to waste or remain unnoticed. In order to extract the best benefits from the resources of the destinations, the businesses operating at such places must utilise these resources judiciously so that they don't go to waste. The local people were asked if "the resources of this area are being utilised in an effective manner." Around 43 percent agreed with the statement, 23 percent strongly agreed, 24 percent disagreed, and 10.5% strongly disagreed. The overall mean rating of the responses is found to be 2.78 on a scale of 1 to 4, indicating that most of the respondents feel that the local resources are effectively and properly being utilised by these rural tourism entrepreneurs (Table 14; Fig. 14).

Table 14 Proper Utilization of Local Resources

Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean (Likert Scale)
43 (22.7 %)	82 (43.3 %)	45 (23.8 %)	19 (10.05 %)	2.78

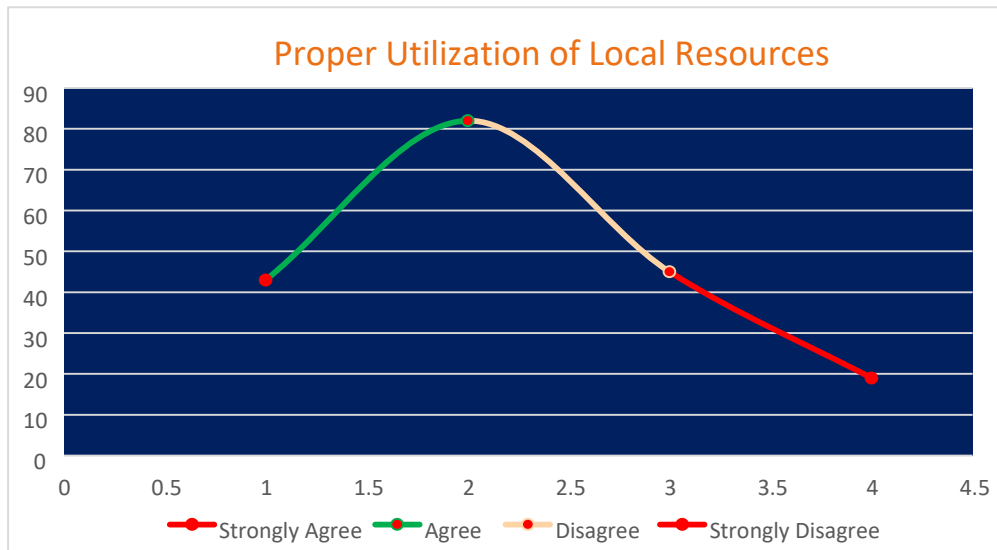


Fig. 14 Proper Utilization of Local Resources

Conclusions

Rural tourism refers to all of the activities that are owned, operated, and maintained by village residents, basically as a village-based enterprise. The fundamental idea behind rural tourism is to provide the local community with benefits through business opportunities, income generation, job opportunities, the conservation and development of rural arts and crafts, investments in the construction of infrastructure, and the preservation of the region's natural resources and cultural heritage. The findings from this research make it abundantly evident that rural tourism entrepreneurship has great potential for the Kashmir Valley's economic growth. The analysis of current literature makes it abundantly evident that rural tourist entrepreneurship is crucial to the provision of earnings and job possibilities for Kashmir's rural residents. Results of the study show that many people from the host community have been employed by tourism enterprises, raising income levels, improving living standards, and reducing migration. However, it has also been found that there is a scarcity of tourism-

operated enterprises and infrastructure development in rural areas that have enough potential for development. Since the tourism business requires a lot of work, it will probably create more employment in the future. With the right training, rural residents might find jobs as guides and carriers because the majority of the natural beauty can be found outside of urban areas. Additionally, creating more jobs in rural regions would help prevent individuals from moving permanently to cities. It may help bring back the greatest folk crafts and art forms and open up new growth opportunities. The sociocultural component of rural tourism aims to increase the visitor's engagement with the locals' culture and community. This might come from absorbing religious customs or encouraging regional handicrafts. The most important thing to do is promote tourism and entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

In light of all these factors, government initiatives should place a high priority on the development of rural tourist entrepreneurship. Different rural areas have different tourist attractions that need consideration by the government. A well-designed policy framework and a government programme for rural tourism development are essential. Creation of training and educational facilities for tourism studies in collaboration with the local communities. Preparing tourism items to draw particular visitor types in accordance with the assessment of a tourist location's carrying capacity. Develop circuits for rural tourism.

Construction of both general and tourism-related infrastructure. The potential of rural tourism in the Kashmir Valley should be highlighted through an effective campaign that involves both national and international media. It's crucial to engage stakeholders, work together with them, and connect with and support local communities. The government should facilitate new start-ups, and such schemes should be provided that attract more and more people to benefit. Assessing rural communities' educational and training needs can help them develop their

entrepreneurial skills and capabilities in the tourist sector. To empower locals and support their active engagement in rural tourist entrepreneurship, develop targeted capacity-building initiatives and programmes. Scholars and decision-makers may better understand rural tourist entrepreneurship and contribute to its sustainable growth by resolving these constraints and doing more research based on the suggested topics.

Limitations and scope for future study

Sample Size: Only 189 respondents were included in the study's sample, which may restrict how broadly the results may be applied to a wider community. Future studies' reliability and validity might be improved by expanding the sample size and recruiting a more varied group of participants, say experts.

Geographic Focus: The study concentrated on certain rural vacation spots in the Kashmir Valley. The results could not, therefore, be relevant to other rural tourist attractions in various areas or nations. To gain a more thorough knowledge of rural tourism entrepreneurship, future studies should take into account investigating a larger range of rural tourist sites.

Self-administered questionnaires were used as the main tool for gathering data for this investigation. The whole richness of participants' experiences and viewpoints may not be adequately captured by this approach due to response bias. Future research might use mixed-method techniques, such as in-depth interviews and observation, to collect more detailed and thorough data.

Time Restrictions: Due to the study's lengthy duration, the researchers may not have been able to fully document seasonal fluctuations and the long-term effects of rural tourist entrepreneurship. It might be possible to gain a deeper knowledge of the dynamics and sustainability of rural tourist entrepreneurship by conducting longitudinal research that covers several seasons or years.

Lack of Comparison: The study did not compare the perspectives of visitors or other stakeholders, focusing only on those of the host communities. To develop a more thorough knowledge of the difficulties and potential of rural tourism entrepreneurship, future studies might include the viewpoints of travellers, government officials, and tourism entrepreneurs.

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