



PERCEIVED SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF RURAL TOURISM: A CASE OF THAR DESERT OF RAJASTHAN

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Abstract

Rural tourism, a diversification possibility for declining mass tourism, has played a key role in the development of rural areas that were economically and socially depressed. It has been perceived as a valuable and growing sector of overall tourism market, representing a significant source of income to rural economics. The development of rural tourism -like any other forms of tourism- may have unfavorable economic, social and environmental consequences for local communities. In relatively small tourism resort towns or villages, increased population and crowd especially in peak season cause noise pollution and congestion. Review in Indian context, there is really a dearth of research work in the field of rural tourism in general and desert rural tourism in particular. In Rajasthan where the majority of population live in rural area; the scope of rural tourism is enormous. Current need of rural communities to diversify their economies and to replace traditional depleting industries compelled the rural economies

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to choose tourism as an avenue to achieve increase in income, employment and economical stability while revitalizing community's traditional resources. The case study for this paper is from a rural area in Thar Desert of Rajasthan.

Introduction

Rural tourism, a diversification possibility for declining mass tourism, has played a key role in the development of rural areas that were economically and socially depressed (Sharpley 2002, Blaine and Golan 1993; Derno 1991). It has been the object of intensive research for several years and its significance and contribution to the rural economy are well documented (Isabeile Frochot, 2004; Fleischer A. and Pizam, 1997; OECD, 1994). It has been perceived as a valuable and growing sector of overall tourism market, representing a significant source of income to rural economics (Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer, 1994). In peripheral and remote areas, it has been considered as a tool for increasing local jobs (Eadington and Smith 1992, Echter 1995; Fleisher 1999). Interestingly, it does not compete with traditional occupations in the use of resources as indicated in the results of survey conducted by University of Excter, England (Davies, et al. 1983). The survey concluded that most farmers went into the tourism business to increase their income and that tourism did not compete with agriculture in the use of farm resources and labor. Obviously, well managed and focused rural tourism might become a new source of income and employment and, at the same time, fulfill the broader role of breaking down social isolation and encourage the repopulation of such non-urban communities located in rural areas (Cavaco 1995). In these rural settings; increasing demand for tourism encourages new infrastructure investment (Inskeep, 1991), communication and transport possibilities (Millan and Pizam, 1988). As a result of these infrastructural development residents might have a better standard of living and higher income.

The growing number of tourists and visitors who want to spend their spare time with the indigenous people of region that has its own identity (Kosck, 1998) and new employment opportunity attract people to migrate to rural area that might cause a gradual change in a society's value, beliefs and cultural practices (Ekram et al, 1999). It also provides the society with the opportunity to get in touch with the outer world and enables locals retain their professions (Oppermann M., 1995; Staudacher C., 1984). Moreover, many people of different cultures come together by means of tourism; facilitate the exchange of cultures (Brayley et al, 1990). Thus tourism is perceived to contribute to change in value system, individual behavior, collective

lifestyle and moral conduct (Ap and Crompton, 1998). Apart from that it can contribute to the revitalization of arts, crafts and local culture and to the realization of cultural identity and heritage. In order to attract more tourists, architectural and historical sites are restored and protected by private and public sector (Inskeep, 1991; Liu and Var 1986). Further semi-urbanization or urbanization caused by rapid development of tourism might improve government and local services such as fire protection, police and security (Milman and Pizam 1988).

The development of rural tourism -like any other forms of tourism- may have unfavorable economic, social and environmental consequences for local communities (Cannon 1984). That's why this 'magic wand' that will speed up economic progress (Haggast et al 1995 p.36), must be treated with caution. Unplanned and uncontrolled constructions, distorted urbanization and inadequate infrastructure damage the natural environment and wildlife, and cause air and water pollution. No doubt, tourism is known as job creator, but at the same time it is also blamed for creating low wages and only seasonal employment (Fredrick 1993). Apart from that, because of increased demand from foreign tourists, the prices of goods and services might go up (Liu and Var, 1986; Husbans, 1989). Increasing demand for accommodation, might push up the rents as well as the land prices for building new houses and new accommodations for tourist (Pizam 1998; Var et al 1985). Higher land prices in these areas might force small operators to sell or become large operators (Gartner, 2004). In addition to its above mentioned economic impacts, tourism may lead to a decline in moral values; invoke use of alcohol and drugs; increased crime rates and tension in the community (Milman and Pizam 1988). It is argued that tourism is environment friendly, but the opponents counter that it degrades valuable and finite resources (Gibson, 1993). In relatively small tourism resort towns or villages, increased population and crowd especially in peak season cause noise pollution and congestion. This also limits the use of public areas such as parks, gardens and beaches as well as the local services for the residents, which sometimes result in negative attitudes towards tourists (Ross, 1992).

Review in Indian context, there is really a dearth of research work in the field of rural tourism in general and desert rural tourism in particular. It was only in 1994, when the fact that the tourists who came from different parts of the world, did not come in search of luxury and comfort but they look forward to an opportunity of enjoying the local life from close quarters (R.Bhanawat; 1994). In Rajasthan where the majority of population live in rural area; the scope of rural tourism is enormous. This is more so because of the fact that most of Indian art and craft fairs, festivals etc. which attract huge interest and attention are rural in origin and are celebrated in their original form in the villages. Rajasthan villages are characterized by their

“isolation” which has enabled them to preserve their identity and rustic charm. These villages are known for their backwardness, illiteracy and lack of infrastructure and other facilities. (A.F. Ferguson & Co., 2001). Current need of rural communities to diversify their economies and to replace traditional depleting industries compelled the rural economies to choose tourism as an avenue to achieve increase in income, employment and economical stability while revitalizing community’s traditional resources (UCCI 2000).

Though problems of these rural areas are multi dimensional, poverty can be regarded as source of every problem. The rural tourism is the single most factor for development and solution of the problem for these areas (FICCI-2001). If tourist expenditure circulates locally and the leakages are low (which is characteristic of Rajasthan rural areas), a significant improvement can be made in income and living standard of people of that locality (N.K Piplani 2001). Also tourism’s inherent quality of employment generation has reduced migration from rural Rajasthan which, in turn helped in reduction of urban poverty (Jitender and Narayan Das 2003). The problem related to seasonal nature of farm income could be mitigated to a certain extent by adopting the concept of rural tourism (A.F. Ferguson & Co. 2001). Farmers can practice tourism as a part-time occupation by offering accommodation, serving as tourist guides etc. This can help to shield them from economic ups and downs associated with pursuance of a single activity (FICCI-2001). Existing shops of rural area can also carry on an additional task of providing information to tourists, selling souvenirs etc. This will generate extra income for them. A study (Dept. of Tourism, India 1996-97) concluded that per capita income during the peak season was nearly four times than in lean season among the local service providers in tourism field which also includes local shopkeepers. This also indicated that tourism played a vital role in enhancing the standard of living of artists & artisan’s families by enabling them to acquire quality housing and other necessities such as drinking water, electricity and toilet facilities within the home premises and ownership of relatively costly assets. Further rural tourism development provides a ready market for the products of local artisans (Financial Express 2004). The appreciation and purchase of art forms help in the survival of that art as well as generate monetary benefits for the concerned people at one hand and generates a sense of ethnic pride among the rural residents on the other hand (UCCI-2001).

But in rural settings, tourism would benefit the local population only when provision is made for the local population to be service providers for activities like organizing tours, acting as guides, providing equipments etc. The growth of opportunity in rural tourism may attract external parties taking up the role of service providers, thereby depriving the local population of the benefits, which rightfully should have accrued to them (A.F. Ferguson & Co. 2001). RTDC 2003, report clearly indicated that “in case of Rajasthan Rural Tourism, most of the arrangements are made by

city operators, which do not result in any economic benefit to the local community". Rural Tourism has helped in conserving and preserving the ancient monuments which otherwise would have been left neglected and decayed (Bhim Singh 2000). The palaces and forts in Rajasthan converted into heritage hotels are good examples. It hastens the process of development and gives a chance to the village folk to interact with outside world (Ashok Sharma 2002). The locals (Villagers) come out of superstitious and lead a civilized life, ultimately this improves the standard of living (Mishra & Dass 2003). Further there is almost no child labor found in rural tourism in desert area (DOT 97) and tourism changes gender role equation as women played a major role in handicraft production, such as embroidery, weaving, batik waxing and dying, in selling souvenirs etc. This elevated their status both at home and in society (FICCI 2001).

As far as society is concerned, there are bound to be inhibitions, some genuine and others out of mistrust and lack of communication. Exploitation of rural hospitality by unscrupulous elements remains as one of the primary concerns (UCCI 2000). Tourists visiting rural destination initiates disruption in the form of changes in earning patterns, power structure relationship and eventually in social systems (Ferguson & Co. 2001). The advent of tourists also brings in increased social awareness which may not be looked upon kindly by some sections of local folks. Further, the important rituals and customs, when adopted for performance before the tourists in a non-serious way, lose the purpose and ultimately the danger of losing indigenous culture form arises (FICCI 2001). According to executive committee of Udaipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry (UCCI) 2003, the increased tourism in rural areas can make a causality of culture by accelerating the pace of urbanization.

Rural Environments have fragile ecosystems and excessive tourism may severely damage these destinations, ironically these were the attractions to begin with. Excessive inflow of tourists may generate need for extra accommodation leading to a compromise on space and openness. This also may result in increased traffic and inflows bringing with it the associated problems of pollution and congestion (A.F. Ferguson & Co.). Environmental management, local involvement and sound legislators are crucial, if rural tourism is to be promoted and to ensure its positive contribution to the lives of rural people.

Overview of Rural Tourism in Rajasthan

Rajasthan is located in Northwestern India and share boundaries with the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat as well as long international boundary with Pakistan. It is situated between 23°3'N to 30°12'N latitudes and 69°30'E to 78°17'E longitudes. Rajasthan, the second largest Indian

state with an expanse of 342,239 sq. km. accounts 10.74% country's total area of country. The population of the state is 5,94,00,000 (2001), out of which more than 70 per cent people live in 37889 villages of state. The economy of rural areas, are with a very low population density, is based upon agriculture, cattle rearing and other primary sector occupations. The state is divided into arid, semi-arid, sub-humid and humid zones on the basis of water availability and rainfall. The state receives maximum rainfall in summer months (July to Sept.). The variation of rainfall across the districts is very wide. The availability of ground water varies and absence of any perennial river in the state adds to the problem of water. Rajasthan is the driest state of country with only one fourth of the area irrigated and agriculture is mainly rain fed. With these water conditions non-agriculture activities has always been important to rural Rajasthan and many of these have a long traditions of patronage by the numerous princes of the state in the Pre-British and colonial period. Presently, the population engaged in rural non-farm sector (RNFS) is more than 214370. Studies have indicated sub-sector trends in RNFS employment, such as textiles products in Jaipur, mining in Dhopur and rural tourisms in Jaisalmer which have generated substantial RNFS employment, without, being affected by agricultural performance. The committee on employment issues chaired by Dr. V. S. Vyas (Government of Rajasthan 1990), suggested tourism as one of the important activities which could generate substantial employment in rural Rajasthan.

Before going into finer details of tourism and its impacts, one should examine the trends and phenomenon of its development. From last two decades, Rajasthan has got established itself as an important tourist destination not only in the country but also all over the world. This is evident from the fact that number of tourists visiting Rajasthan has almost increased four times since 1983. The number of tourists who came to Rajasthan in 1983 were approximately 32 Lakhs, which has increased to approximately 62.87 lakhs in 1996-97. Rajasthan has remained the favorite tourist destination for the year 2007. The state has recorded a 50% growth in domestic tourist arrivals, a 49% increase in foreign tourist arrival in 2007.

One significant aspect of tourism development in the last decade has been its homogeneous growth distribution almost all over the state with conspicuous inclination and direction of growth towards rural areas especially desert and remote areas mainly for getting opportunity to experience rural culture and enjoying the lows of life formed close to heart (Lalit K Panwar, 1997). Simply the core attraction are the villages of the state which are richly endowed with hundred of forts castles, palaces, havelies, handicrafts, performing arts, wildlife, vast deserts, cuisine etc. The development of tourism in these remote areas has transformed the life of villagers. The tremendous employment opportunities generated (through tourism) has helped the economy of rural poor where there was no scope for any other economic

activities. The growth of rural tourism is the result of strategic efforts of Rajasthan Government. In 1991 the Government initiated the paying guest scheme in order to boost up the rural entrepreneurship in rural areas. In the first phase, the number of families registered were 325 in Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur district provided 2485 beds. By Dec: 1993 these hosts served 4035 foreigner tourists and in 2006, the number was almost ten times of it. There was no instance of misbehavior either by the host or by the tourist. Because of all these developments, there is a plausible decline in migration of rural active population to urban areas for jobs. The overall infrastructures in these rural areas have improved. Now the village and cottage industry are getting new markets, patrons and avenues. The developments heralded a new era in the rise of demand for traditional handicrafts and new export markets have been developed, resulting in new lease of life to thousands of dying and indebted rural artisans and their craftsmanship (Government of Rajasthan 1998). Presently, Rajasthan Government is planning to set up a Tourism Board which would have representatives from Government Departments and the private sector. The board will give suggestions on boosting tourism. The Government is also considering a proposal to popularize the market of fairs and festivals in the state. Some fairs and festivals have become internationally popular. Examples are Pushkar and Jaisalmer's desert festival. Further the Government is planning to encourage those fairs and festival which are not presently popular but have a potential for attracting tourists, especially in backward and underdeveloped area.

The Case Study

The case study for this paper is from a rural area in Thar Desert of Rajasthan. Thar desert (also known as the Great Indian Desert is a region of constantly shifting sand-dunes, with sparse vegetations in some areas. It also continues into Pakistan as the Cholistan desert. Thar desert in Rajasthan covers the greater part of plain of Marwar and it includes the districts of Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Churu, part of western Nagaur and western two thirds of Barmer and Jodhpur districts. The present study includes above mentioned six districts covering an area of 51430 square KM (44.25% of total area of Rajasthan), out of which 6691700 hectares is cropped area, 160600 hectares forest area and rest of the surface is covered with sand-dunes. Total agricultural production including both food grain and oil seed was 15,82,200 tonnes accounting only 9.68% of total agricultural production of state. Minerals bentonite, gypsum, wolfram, sand-stone and clay are found but lack of infrastructural facilities is major hindrance in mineral production. In year 2006-2007, total mineral production in study area was only 5.33% of total mineral production of the state. Except than few medium scale industries in district Nagaur, small scale industries including cottage and household industries are prominent in the area. The manufacturing of durries, Bandhei saries, Moiadi (embroidery shoes), Badlas (water

bottle), Ivory carving, Pottery, Biri, Matchbox, Handloom weaving etc. have been initiated under Rajasthan Rural Industrialization Schemes. In 2005–2006, employment opportunities in these industries were 21730 (10.13% of total employment opportunities in Rajasthan).

The main occupation of people in Thar Desert is agriculture followed by cattle-rearing. The scarcity of groundwater and low rain fall (Less than 25 cm. annually) has compelled the residents to live in poverty. Migration in search of cattle fodder in hot summer is a common phenomenon. During hot season the temperature varies between 45°-48°, but in some western parts temperature goes up to 52° and the humidity drops down to about 1% in summer. Temperature also goes down to freezing point (occasionally) in winter season.

Total population of six districts (under study) is 117.1 lakhs (20.73% of state population) according to census 2001. Average population density is 77.39 persons per square km. Nagaur district (156.6 person per sq. km.) witnessed highest density while Jaisalmer district's population density is lowest (13.2 persons per square km). Most of the population resides in villages. Total number of villages in study areas is 6080 (inhabited and uninhabited) and the population in village is made up of two major religious groups namely Hindus and Muslims with smaller number of Jains, Sikhs and Christians. Main dialect is Rajasthani but Urdu, Sindhi and Avadhi are also used in some parts. The literacy rate is 59.31 % in the area while same is 61% in Rajasthan. Literacy rate among women folk is very low. According to census 2001, in Jaisalmer District it was only 32.2%. General amenities wise, Thar villages are known for their backwardness. The area has only 664 bank branches (19.58% total branches in state) 2187 post offices (21.09% of total) and only 14448 primary and secondary schools. Further Health Services are very poor. In Bikaner district hardly 5 primary health centers per lakh population are with, very poor infrastructure and instruments (2005-2006).

Thar desert became a popular destination for domestic as well as international tourist during last decade of 20th century. The area attracted more than 20% of total tourists coming to Rajasthan, in 1996-97. The desert district of Thar received 666208 domestic and 12862 international tourists (approx. 21% of state traffic) in 2006. Area's nearest competitor in term of tourist traffic is Udaipur region, where UCCI-(Udaipur Chamber of Commerce and Industry) has initiated for development of rural tourism. But in study area, tourism planning and marketing are the responsibility of Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation. The Corporation has made the region quite popular among tourist by strategic marketing plans. The Marwar festival (Jodhpur), Desert festival (Jaisalmer) and Camel safari (Bikaner) are great attractions among foreign tourists as well as domestic tourists because of

its efforts. The region is well connected to Jaipur, Delhi, Mumbai and other main cities by air, railway and road transport. Though Jodhpur is situated on the Indian Airlines route, but bulk of travelers entered the desert by surface transport. All district HQs are linked by luxury and express trains, Rajasthan state roadways coaches also links most of the tourist places in the rural areas. The accommodations Paying Guest Scheme launched by Rajasthan Tourism is successfully operating in Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner and other districts of study area.

A number of villages in study area has great tourist resources in form of hundred of forts, castles, palaces, havelies, handicrafts, performing arts, cuisine etc. All of these villages are easily accessible by roadways and consists of accommodation, food and beverages, recreation, entertainments, sports and shopping facilities. In last decade of 20th century, area remained Rajasthan's most developed desert tourist destination. Government of Rajasthan has promoted tour package named 'Desert Triangle' which included villages of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner districts. Local residents of these villages have a high level of exposure to tourists through the typical encounter because of the longer length of stay by visitors.

Table 1. Rural Tourism Resources of Study Area

District	Villages/ Sites (where Tourism exists since 1996)	Rural Tourism Resource	Special Remarks
Jodhpur	Khichan	Demoiselle cranes, arts & crafts	Bird watching
	Guda Bishnoi	Desert wildlife & birds	ecotourism
	Khejarli	Desert flora and fauna	wildlife
	Osian	Ancient Jain temple, history	culture
	Sathingarh	16 th century fort, handicrafts	history
	Khejadala	Medieval fort, arts & crafts	history
	Sardar Samand	Lake and old palace, water sport	bird watching
	Jhalamand	18 th century castle, arts & crafts	heritage hotel
	Balsamand	12 th century lake palace, heritage	ecotourism
	Dhawa-Doli	Desert wildlife, arts & crafts	ecotourism
	Salawas	Desert handicrafts	desert crafts
	Mandar	Old capital, garden, history	culture
	Maachhiya	Desert wildlife, trekking	wildlife
Jaisalmer	Akal	Desert fossil park	Prehistoric
	Kuldhara	Medieval township, history	Desert culture
	Khuri	Desert landscape, safari	Desert culture

Bikaner	Bhadriyaji	Pilgrimage, desert fauna & flora	Ecotourism
	Pokaran	14 th century fort, arts/crafts	Pottery
	Ram Devra	Famous pilgrim center, culture	Desert culture
	Sildasari	Desert National Park	Desert wildlife
	Gajner	Beautiful palaces, lake, wildlife	Heritage hotel
	Deshnok	Karni temple, desert, wildlife	Handicrafts
	Pugal	Medieval fort, camel safari	Rural arts
	Husansar	Water sports, bird watching	Lift canal
	Kolayat	Famous pilgrim center, lake	Temple fair
Nagaur	Mukam	Famous Bishnoi Pilgrim center	Annual fair
	Sagar	Historical royal cenotaphs	Safari
	Bikampur	Camel safari, water sports	Canal cruises
	Dugaur Garh	18 th century fort, arts & crafts	Heritage Hotels
	Nagaur	16 th century fort, Handicrafts	Cattle fair
	Merta	15 th century fort, Poetess Meera	Handicrafts
	Kuchaman	Medieval fort, rural, safari Marble	Art & Craft
	Makrana	15 th century fort, safari, wild-life	Marble
	Khimsar	Cattle fair	Heritage Hotel
Churu	Parbatsar	Old haveli, Jain university	Handicrafts
	Ladnu		Wild-life
	Taal Chhappar	Bird-watching, wild-life	Black bucks
	Churu	Old havelies, handicrafts	Safari, folk music
Barmer	Sujangarh	Old havelies, art & crafts	Music
	Jasolkher	Medieval temples, cattle fair	Desert culture
	Kiradu	12 th century temples, arts & crafts	History
	Tilwara	Cattle fair famous for horses	Desert culture
	Nakoda	Ancient famous jain temple	Culture
	Mahabar	Sand-dunes, handicrafts	Desert
	Siwana	Medieval fort, trekking	Desert, History
Kanana	Desert dance festival	Folk dance	

Survey Instrument

In the study, perceived impacts on tourism by local residents of study area were assessed by using impact scale developed by Ap and Crompton (1998). This scale originally consisted of 35 items and assessed tourism impacts by measuring both belief and affects towards the impact attributed. The Ap and Crompton's scale was first translated into Hindi by a group of academicians who are experts in both languages to avoid any ambiguity in interpretation and wording of the items. Drawing on a series of interviews with a group of local residents in study area including normal residents, tourist shop owners and public officials, some adjustments (both additions and deletions) were then made to original scale. The new scale consisted of 33 items. Using the same methodology used by Ap and Crompton, the perceived tourism impact scale measured both belief and affect components. Both the components were measured by asking respondents to rate the level of change associated with each items. A five point scale was used (1 = large decreased, 2 = moderate decrease, 3 = no change, 4 = moderate increase and 5 = large increase). The evaluation component of the scale was measured by asking respondents to indicate their level of like or dislike with each item on a five-point rating scale 1 = dislike, 2 = somewhat dislike, 3 = neither like or dislike, 4 = somewhat like and 5 = like.

Sample Selection and Data Collection

A total number of 325 residents of study area were interviewed through a structured questionnaire on random basis during 2004 and 2005. The researchers gathered data during both lean and peak season. 238 respondents completed the survey with a response rate of 73.23% and the sample appears to well represent the population in terms of the demographic profile of respondents, which is presented in Table no. 02.

Table 2. Demographic Profile Of Respondents (N=238)

	Number	%
Gender		
Male	162	68.06
Female	76	31.93
Age		
Under 20 Years	18	07.56
21-30 Years	97	40.75
31-45 Years	68	28.57
Over 45 Years	52	21.84
Marital Status		
Single	123	51.68
Married	106	44.54
Divorced/Widowed/Separated	09	03.78
Education		
Uneducated	32	13.45
Primary School	63	26.47
High School	117	49.16
College Level	26	10.92
Annual Income		
Under Rs 50000	149	62.61
Rs 50000-Rs 1,50,000	65	27.31
Over Rs 1,50,000	24	10.09
Occupation		
Agriculture	68	28.57
Cattle rearing	44	18.49
Service (Govt/Private)	47	19.75
Trade	32	13.45
Tourism Business	19	07.93
Students	28	11.76

Analysis

Factor analysis was used to identify the underlying dimensions of perceived impacts of tourism. Then the areas where the impacts of tourism are perceived favorably or unfavorably are determined by mean ranking of each impact item.

Table 3.

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigen-Value	% Variance explained	Cumulative %
Factor 1		9.17	27.8	27.8
Social and Cultural				
Opportunities to learn other people and culture	0.77			
Variety of restaurants in the area	0.71			
Change in life style	0.59			
Variety of cultural facilities and activities in the community	0.58			
Variety of entertainment in the area	0.56			
Understanding of different people and cultures by the residents	0.53			
Opportunities to restore and protect historical structures	0.48			
Awareness / recognition of the local culture and heritage	0.45			
Factor 2		4.04	12.2	40.0
Economic Development				
Number of jobs in the community	0.81			
Personal income of local residents	0.79			
Standard of living	0.78			
Revenue generated in the local economy	0.70			
Variety of shopping facilities in the area	0.51			
Factor 3		2.10	6.4	46.4
Quality of environment				
Quality of buildings and city planning	0.57			
Quality of natural environment	0.51			
Opportunities to benefit from activities in the public area	0.45			
Recreational and sport facilities	0.45			

Factor 4		1.59	4.8	51.2
State and Local Services				
Quality of local services	0.81			
Adequacy of local services in meeting residents' demand	0.77			
Financial resources of local services	0.50			
Adequacy of state services in meeting residents' demand	0.47			
Level of investment, development and infrastructure spending	0.45			
Factor 5		1.45	4.4	55.6
Cost of Living				
Property value and housing price	0.80			
Price of goods and services	0.73			
Inequality of income distribution	0.59			

Results

The factor analysis indicated seven underlying dimension of perceived impacts by residents of study area which makes good conceptual sense. To determine underlying dimension, principle components factor analysis was used and out of 33 items, the factors with loading greater than 0.45 for each factor were derived. The seven factors emerged follow as : social and cultural, economic development, quality of environment, state and local services, cost of living, community attitude and crowding and congestion. The factors were found largely consistent with the findings of earlier researchers mainly with Ap and Crompton.

The Table 4 reveals respondents' attitude towards the perceived socio-cultural impacts of tourism in study area. The mean measures of impact items shows that impacts associated with economic development of area most favored by tourism development have highest scores.

The most favored items were:

- Variety of shopping facilities in area (14.37)
- Standard of living (13.87)
- Revenue generated in local economy (13.68)

Socio-cultural impacts were also found favorable after economic impacts. Some of the items are:

- Variety of restaurant in area (13.58)
- Change in life style (12.82)
- Opportunities to learn other people and culture (12.48)
- Variety of entertainment facilities in area (11.88)

The cost of living aspect of tourism impacts comprising 'property values and housing prices' and 'prices of goods and services' with values 8.07 and 8.76 were also evaluated relatively favorable. The least favorable impact attributes perceived by residents were associated with quality of environment, community attitude and crowding and congestion.

Table 4.

Factors	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Social and Cultural				
Opportunities to learn other people and culture	231	12.48	7.74	8
Variety of restaurants in the area	231	13.58	6.87	4
Change in life style	228	12.82	7.03	7
Variety of cultural facilities and activities in the community	230	8.69	6.20	15
Variety of entertainment in area	232	11.88	6.82	9
Understanding of different people and cultures by the residents	226	10.17	6.93	11
Opportunities to restore and protect historical structures	219	7.39	6.05	23
Awareness/recognition of the local culture and heritage	215	6.02	6.03	28
Economic Development				
Number of jobs in the community	234	13.52	6.02	5
Personal income of local residents	226	12.91	5.70	6
Standard of living	231	13.87	6.26	2
Revenue generated in the local economy	226	13.68	5.54	3

Variety of shopping facilities in the area	235	14.37	7.13	1
Quality of environment				
Quality of buildings and city planning	223	5.00	4.86	31
Quality of natural environment	230	3.85	3.89	33
Opportunities to benefit from activities in the public area	224	6.24	5.77	27
Recreational and sport facilities	225	7.84	5.64	19
State and Local Services				
Quality of local services	228	7.80	6.09	20
Adequacy of local services in meeting residents' demand	220	7.16	6.09	25
Financial resources of local services	191	9.57	6.04	12
Adequacy of state services in meeting residents' demand	226	7.31	5.84	24
Level of investment, development and infrastructure spending	210	8.94	6.35	13
Cost of Living				
Property value and housing price	234	8.07	4.57	18
Price of goods and services	235	8.76	4.85	14
Inequality of income distribution	222	5.95	4.39	29
Community attitude				
Positive attitude of local residents towards tourists	234	8.67	7.09	16
Community spirit among local residents	224	5.35	5.48	30
Traditional and moral values of local residents	228	4.89	4.73	32
Dynamism and liveliness of community	232	10.41	7.22	10

The most favorable residents' attitude towards economic impacts of tourism tends to support the view that tourism growth in area has contributed significantly in job creation and income generation. Tourism was found as a major source of income for some villages of study area and much of the infrastructural development. But on other hand, residents' attitude on 'property values, housing prices and the prices of goods and services was found negative which can be interpreted that the

new revenue generated from industry flow into the property owners and businessmen who in most of the cases, do not belong to these rural areas. As a result the residents suffer from increased cost of living.

Tourism development in the study area plays an important role in facilitating the exchange of cultures and creating opportunities to learn other people and cultures. That's why, there is a relatively strong and favorable perception towards some of the social and cultural aspects of tourism. The least favorable aspects of tourism impacts were: Quality of environment, community's attitude and crowding and congestion. Inadequate infrastructure in tourist regions destroys natural environment and causes air and sound pollution. The terms traditional moral values and community spirit among local residents also witnessed negative perceptions of residents. The development of tourism may lead to a decline in moral values by increasing materialization of human relations and non-economic relations and community spirit begin to lose their importance in the community. All these may partially result in unfavorable relations between guest and host community.

Conclusions

The study is a modest attempt to identify the residents' attitude towards socio-cultural impacts of tourism in rural areas of Thar Desert in Rajasthan. With minor changes, the impact scale developed by Ap and Crompton was used and finally 33 items scale of Hindi language was subjected to Factor Analysis. Social and cultural, economic development, state and local services, cost of living, community attitude and crowding and congestion factors were generated by factor analysis and each of these seven factors indicated satisfactory level of reliability. The study has concluded that the respondents of rural area perceived the economic aspect of tourism impacts most favorably. It indicates that the perception of locals at rural destination favors that the prospects of tourism are promising for them. Social and cultural impacts aspect was also favored by residents. But the quality of environment, community attitude, crowding and congestion were the least favorable aspects of tourism impacts which can be stated that tourism is affecting their culture. At the end, one can say that administration want to implement, sustainable tourism development in these rural setting. It is imperative to obtain local participation for rural tourism to become an important tool for development of the rural area and it must be given more attention.

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AN OVERVIEW OF TOURISM DISASTERS - STRATEGIES TO RESTORE FADING OUT DESTINATIONS

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Abstract

Tourism can be vulnerable to disasters and, being fragmented its response is often difficult to initiate and coordinate. In an era of considerable disasters and uncertainty, many destinations have been made alarmingly aware of the fickle nature of tourism. Peak industry bodies, academicians and professionals advocate the introduction of risk/crisis management strategies as a means to prepare against adverse and operational capacity of any destination. The healthy operation of tourism would relate to develop a knowledge management system for disasters in a tourist destination in terms of a knowledge framework for tourism disaster management at various levels.

This paper examines the coverage of textual analysis to examine the framing of tourist risk in the account to these disasters and therefore contends that the strategies on disasters need to employ more precise and careful monitoring of disasters in major generating markets. Such activities may be invaluable in providing assistance to tourism managers

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