
INTEGRATED VILLAGE TOURISM FOR RURAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT: A REVIEW OF VILLAGE TOURISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY OF KUMBALANGHI MODEL TOURISM VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT:

Tourism is a multi-faceted activity of economic, social, cultural, and environmental inputs which cut across other conventional sectors in the economy. Tourism creates more job opportunities for a wide spectrum of job seekers from the unskilled to the specialized, even in the remote parts of the country. Village tourism is among the most polymorphous of all forms of Special Interest Tourism [SIT]. It unveils the village life, art, culture, and heritage at its locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially by interacting with tourists and the natives of the place for a more enriching tourism experience. It also gives opportunities to the guests to enjoy the unique culture of village life through participation in events, experiencing the local cuisine, and collecting the ethnic goods, which in turn can improve the welfare of the local people. This paper provides an overview of village tourism *and the sustainable development of the rural ecosystem through integral activity and thereby understands* the influence of tourism development among the local community and overall in *Kumbalangi* village.

Keywords :Kumbalangi; rural tourism; sustainable; model tourism village; ecotourism; rural development

INTRODUCTION:

Tourism is considered an important tool for Rural Development. Rural tourism has become popular in many parts of the world with the growing need for super segmentation of the tourism market [1,2]. The concept of rural tourism and its development is useful for a country like India, where most of the Indian population resides in villages. Indian Ministry of Tourism reports in the Rural Tourism scheme for infrastructure development guidelines, that the trends of industrialization and development have had an urban-centric approach across the world [3]. This has caused falling income levels and lesser job opportunities leading to urbanization syndrome in the rural areas. Rural tourism is considered an activity that can provide a solution to these problems. Besides, the other factors including, growing interest in heritage and culture, increasing levels of awareness, improved accessibility to the areas, and environmental consciousness which move the trend towards rural tourism. The main aim of the rural tourism scheme is to promote the village as the primary tourism product to spread tourism and its socio-economic benefits to the rural community and its new geographic regions [4].

The development of rural tourism has a potential impact on the economy by generating employment, bringing foreign exchange, benefit to small scale entrepreneurs, and improvement in public services, such as roads, electricity, telecommunication, proper sanitization, etc for a better standard of living [5]. Rural tourism helps to develop social,

cultural, and educational values. This kind of tourism makes cultural understanding through fairs and festivals and also makes the exchange of culture beneficial for both. The market for agro products and handicrafts will develop in rural areas, therefore farmers and artisans will develop direct contact with the customers. It reduces the migration of rural people to urban areas. Employment in rural tourism requires qualified personnel, which helps to educate young people to get the job they want and it also helps to empower the women. Benefits get from tourism enable rural people to learn to preserve the natural habitats, bio-diversity historical monuments and also learn the importance of preservation of natural resources. They will also learn to protect their traditional values and beliefs. On the economic plan, the existence of jobs in rural tourism requires local government revenue, and then the revenue can head in form of various investments for the rural community [6]. Therefore, an attempt has been made through this review to study and enumerate the development and marketing of rural tourism in Kumbalangi, a small village in Ernakulam District, Kerala.

VILLAGE TOURISM IN KERALA- ANALYSIS OF MINISTRY OF TOURISM GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India initiated the Endogenous Tourism Project- Rural Tourism Scheme (ETP-RTS) in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme in 2003. Infrastructure development of the projects was funded by the Ministry of Tourism and funds for capacity building were provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for 36 rural tourism sites. A maximum of INR 5000000 was sanctioned for each project under this scheme for the development of tourism-related infrastructure. From 2003-

2007, 139 rural tourism projects in 27 States were sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism including 36 rural sites where UNDP supported capacity-building initiatives. Village tourism was not aggressively promoted in Kerala until the Union Government has been chosen three serene rural destinations from Kerala; Aranmula, Balaramapuram, and Kumbalangi for an innovative development project. At present more villages are promoted as tourism destinations as part of the development program [7].

Kerala is the first state in India to declare tourism as an industry in 1986 by the Government of Kerala. Both the central and state government tourism policy documents state that Kerala tourism is one of the best-liberalized tourism models with the private sector leading tourism development. Availability of a variety of attractions, unique cultural diversity, and tradition, geographical characteristics are the elements that have attracted tourists to this destination for centuries [8]. In the below table the status of Kerala tourism 2019 in terms of foreign tourist arrival has shown a rise of 8.52% over the previous year and the foreign exchange earnings have increased at a rate of 17.19% from 2018 to 2019. Domestic tourists are the main sources of earning in Kerala tourism. Domestic tourist arrival has shown an increase of 17.81% in 2019 over the previous year with an increase of 24.14% total revenue generation over the previous year [9]. Village tourism has been gaining more importance among other forms of tourism due to its sustainability and responsibility among the host and guest. With trends like increasing levels of awareness, environmental consciousness, growing interest in heritage and culture and improved accessibility, rural tourism shows a significant market opportunity in Kerala.

Table 1: Kerala Tourist Statistics 2019

Year	No. of foreign tourist		Foreign Exchange Earnings		Total revenue generated (Direct and Indirect)	
	International	Domestic	International	Domestic	International	Domestic
2019	1189771	18384233	10271.06crores	45010.69 Crores		
2018	1096407	15604661	8764.46crores	36258.01Crores		

EVALUATION OF RURAL TOURISM PROJECTS FROM KERALA BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA:

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India conducted an evaluation and impact study of selected 107 rural tourism projects spread across all the states in India to understand the impact the tourism projects have made in the villages community and whether the tourists have been attracted by the features of the rural tour. The project aims at enhancing the development management of the location and the lives of the residents. The project has software content and hardware content. Software content was meant to positively orient the people towards tourism and to help them to take up different decisive roles in connection with the implementation of the project. Therefore large numbers of training programs were conducted for the residents. The hardware content addresses primarily the development of basic infrastructure. NGOs are formed in the island village to encourage, promote, coordinate and guide tourism activity in the place [10].

3.1 Balaramapuram is a center for the production of traditional varieties of handloom textiles meant for the contemporary cloth-wearing style of Kerala. Its unique craftsmanship makes it an ideal heirloom. The Secretary/The Regional Director, Thiruvananthapuram has the authority to implementation of the project. As part of the tourism development 500m long Shaliyar street has been developed, village handloom

center developed, publicity, awareness, and training programs have been provided. This project has been completed in the year 2005 and it has given satisfactory results to the villagers [10].

3.2 Kumbalangi is a coastal village known as the first "Model Tourism Village" of Kerala is continuously under development through innovative schemes for community development and sustainability. The major attractions are cuisine, boat building, traditional fishing, marine pastoral setting, etc. The Secretary/Central Public Works Department Thiruvananthapuram and The District Collector, Kumbalangi Grama Panchayath are the main organizing agencies. After the completion of the project in 2005, both domestic and foreign tourists' arrival has increased, approach roads have been made, the office has been made, the local area has been developed, the compound wall has been developed, the park has been partially completed. software work like awareness programs has been provided, training programs have been provided. Marketing, the printing of brochures and websites have been developed has also been completed successfully. Due to the implementation of the project Artisans are getting benefits and socio-economic conditions also improved [10].

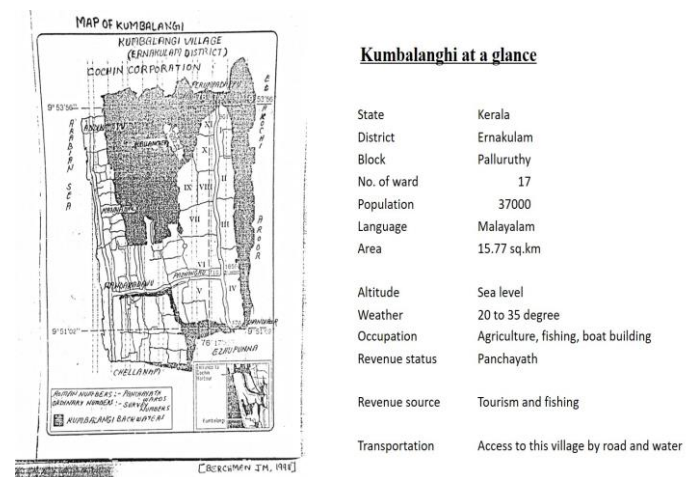
3.3 Aranmula is a village in Pathanamthitta district, Kerala. The main implementing agency is The Secretary/Director of Tourism, Govt. of Kerala/ District Collector and District Magistrate, Kerala and Vasthuvudya Gurukulam, Aranmula, Pathanamthitta, Kerala. The project is completed in the year 2007. Artisans are getting good benefits after the completion of the project, tourists flow has also increased, socio-economic conditions have improved, setting up of permanent workshop cum exhibition centre for Aranmula metal mirror has been completed, setting up of mural art gallery, museum and information

centre at Aranmula as per vastuvidya gurukulam activities has been done, setting up of a museum; permanent academy for vanchipattu singers has been done , utilization of amount by Gram Panchayat-Aranmula for waste management purpose has been done, Pampa Parirakshana Sammittee to utilize the amount for setting up a permanent information centre has been done, mud technology, environment friendly construction method and vasthuvidya have been provided, mural painting-workshops have been organized, Kala aswadana parisheelanam-artist major performance have been taken care of, museum-remuneration by assistants has been done, setting up of ayurvedic community training centre has been completed, Aranmula metal mirror-remuneration by masters has been done [10].

CONCEPT OF KUMBALANGHI MODEL TOURISM VILLAGE:

Kumbalangi is a lovely, serene island that has been developed under the Integrated Tourism Village project as a model tourism village. Here tourism is developing without disturbing the natural beauty and ecological balance of the place (Figure 1). The local inhabitants of Kumbalangi are simple and warm who depend on nature for their survival. The north, east, and south side of Kumbalangi are fully surrounded and the west is partially surrounded by backwater. On the west side, paddy fields adorn the coconut palm-filled island. The golden paddy chaffs that bow down with the weight set against a golden sunset is a silent sight of beauty, which adds to the feel of experiencing the village. More than a hundred Chinese fishing nets form a ring around the village, indicating both the occupation of the people here and the rich aquatic life in the area. The presence of dense mangroves ensures enough breeding ground for prawns, crabs, oysters, and small fishes. Milk fishes are

jumping on the backwater of Kumbalangi is a refreshing view. The village is home to fishermen, farmers, laborers, boatmen, toddy tappers, and coir spinners all alike. Fisherfolk and boatmen also demonstrate various fishing techniques for the tourists [11]. Another interesting attraction of Kumbalangi is the spicy and hot local cuisine. Kumbalangi is rich with art and culture so tourism in Kumbalangi leads to the protection of culture, heritage, and nature along with the empowerment of the rural people. According to the rural tourism aspect which defines as any form of tourism that displays the rural life, art, culture, and heritage at rural locations, thus creating a socio-economic benefit to the local community and enabling interaction between the tourists and the locals for better tourism experience [12], tourism trends in Kumbalangi is categorized into integrated model tourism village, coconut village, fishermen village, eco-tourism village, agricultural and farm tourism village, backwater tourism village, and artist village [13].



(Berchmen, 1998)[14].

Figure 1: Map of Kumbalangi

4.1. Integrated Model Tourism Village:

Under these model tourism business organizations such as tour operators, travel agents, meeting planners and other service providers like accommodation centers,

transport providers, entertainment centers, and the external environment such as social, economic and political, and technological forces are closely linked in the provision of services to travelers. Local community participation in planning and decision-making is one of the unique features of the project. Due to the increasing demand for tourists, private sectors are also interested to invest in Kumbalangi.

Kumbalangi is a lush green village, surrounded by vast stretches of beautiful backwaters and paddy fields, an ideal setting for country boat cruises, aboriginal fishing, crab farming, and prawn culture, etc. Kumbalangi provides a fascinating glimpse into the livelihood of villagers and their age-old, magnificent culture. Kalagramam, an artist's village on four acres of land, displays traditional fishing equipment and handicrafts of the region. The main occupation of the 30,000-odd people living here is fishing. Farming, crab-farming, and coir-matting are the other livelihood options [15]. As part of the eco-tourism concept, many houses in the village offer homestays. Kumbalangi is a sustainable project that not only preserves nature and the environment; it also pays homage to a rich culture and heritage. The holistic implementation of the initiative has delivered many benefits to villagers, including forms of income, a better understanding of urban dwellers, and economic value for activities, better respect for the environment and improved water supply and sanitation facilities, etc. As an appreciation to its ecological balance, inimitable natural beauty, and combined activities of local people, service providers, and the government, Kumbalangi was declared as the Integrated Tourism Village by the government of India, this is often considered as first of its kind.

4.2. Coconut Village:

The coconut tree is considered essential to the traditional lifestyle and livelihood of the people of Kerala. One of the attractions of Kumbalangi is that village is rich in coconut trees. The Coconut Development Board plans to launch a 'Coconut trail', across various states, to provide tourists an insight into the centuries-old coconut culture. Different techniques like coir processing, coconut copra processing, leaf-weaving for roof material, coconut shell handicraft making, toddy tapping which provide a unique experience for tourist from worldwide because it provides an incredible opportunity for tourist to try their skills with these techniques (Table 2). Coir manufacturing was an important source of the local economy. Coir is used to manufacture eco-friendly carpets and mats so it has demand worldwide. Kumbalangi once was the center of 'Vaikom coir' production. Coconut tours are designed to take tourists through the plantations and let them know more about this wonderful tree. The scenic location will have coconut trees of different types and the visitors will get an opportunity to climb the trees if they desire to. A coconut food court will be another attraction at the spot. The coconut-based handicrafts will be on display at the location [13].

Table 2: Different techniques used by the village people for their livelihood needs from coconut tree

Techniques	Description
Leaf-weaving for roof material	Weaved coconut leaves are used for thatching village house roofs, temporary sheds, and shamianas. The green coconut leaves are first seasoned in brackish water, which will enhance the life of weaved leaves. This job is done by females.
Husk-coir processing	It is a unit meant for women, specializing in the manufacturing of coir and coir products. Coconut husk is immersed in water and yields the fibers that are spun together to make

	a coir. Coir weaving is done on specialized ruts. Through this rural traditional coir making unit, the village has a demonstration of coir making
Coconut-copra processing	'Copra' is a sub-product of coconut processing. Coconut oil is the major product obtained from this process.
Coconut shell-handicraft making	The coconut shell is one of the important components of the coconut tree which is used for different purposes including making different models and handicrafts.
Toddy tapping	Toddy is a naturally fermented drink extracted from coconut flower sap. This job is exclusively reserved for men. Toddy could be used as a fresh drink on the first day of extraction only as if it is left longer it gets fermented and turn into vinegar. It could be used in making natural spirit.
Boatbuilding unit	Boatbuilding yards are set on the premises of the house and the boats are developed traditionally. Country boats are boats made up of wood that are locally available like Anjili, Tambakam, and Arana, etc. Wood is first made into planks of thickness $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2 inches. These planks are joined together with coir yarn and coir filling. Oil extracted from sardine fish or neem is used to make a protective coating over it.

in half circles, during high tide is another eye-catching attraction. Other than fishing there are several prawn and crab breeding farms located on both sides of the road that leads to Kallancheri and Anjilithara of Kumbalangi. The fishermen's village will offer a unique experience for all the visitors coming to experience village life.

Table 3 : Diverse traditional fishing practices used by most of the natives in Kumbalangi

Fishing Techniques	Description
Neettuvala operation	It is a kind of equipment for catching fish. For this, a very long net use to capture the fish. Normally three or four fishermen mutually work to fix this net.
Veesuvala operation	It is another type of fishing practice and operated by a single fisherman in a country craft/small boat with the help of a boat rower. Throwing the net in the circular pattern to catch the fish.
Thappipidutham	Catch fishes with human hand without any equipment, a traditional method which attracts fishes especially 'Karimeen' - state fish of Kerala. Normally this is done by village women using some coconut leaves and a pot.
Chinese fishing net operation	A ring of Chinese fishing nets encircles the rural village, Kumbalangi bearing witness to the rich aquatic life. These nets are constructed out of Teak wood and Bamboo poles; they work on the principle of balance. The weight of a man walking along the main beam causes the net to descend into the lake. Rocks of sufficient diameter are suspended from ropes of different lengths. As the net is raised, the rocks one-by-one come to rest on a platform thereby keeping everything in balance. Normally using nighttime for fishing. A lamb has been fixed in the top of the net to attract fishes to the net.

4.3. Fishermen Village:

The United Nations Development Programme cited Kumbalangi, a small fishing village, which is famous for diverse fishing practices [15]. This coastal village depicts the life of a typical fisher folk community. Tourists can watch the Chinese fishing nets being hoisted and cast net and hand net are also used by natives for fishing which is the main occupation of the people here. Prawn farming, shellfish catching and bait fishing near the mangroves are other popular activities that can be watched here (Table 3) [15]. Poomeenchaattam, a group movement of fish

Pappumari	The tree branches are put into an area of water in a circular shape, normally at a radius of 4 to 10 meters. It is kept in the water for more than one month and during that time the fishes will find shelters within the branches, spread in a circular region in water. After a sufficient duration of time, the circular region (the pappu) will be covered with a long net and catch fishes.
Padalu	It is a kind of trap in which tree branches are kept in a cage made out of coconut leaves, for catching the fish. The entire arrangement is brought to the land with help of a handle, attached to the coconut-leaves-cage like the trolley
Clam meat processing	Clams are shellfish found in brackish waters. Many of the inhabitants of Kallanchery Island are occupied in clam meat processing for the lively hood. Male members collect the clam fish from brick water and Ladies steam (boil) the clamshell to extract the meat. The Shell is used for making kind of cement, base paint, and fertilizers

Kumbalangi. Besides, the total ban of plastic and the restriction on building any new structures which are harmful to the ecosystem also attracts the interest of environment-concerned travelers. For tourism, heritage houses are maintained here. The model village will be more eco-friendly - as part of the Kerala Tourism Eco-Initiative, Eco-Kerala. The Kumbalangi project was envisaged to ensure the protection of the fragile ecosystem of the village. Construction activities of resorts, walkways, and other activities that might harm the ecosystem of the village are prohibited here. Only environment-friendly activities are permitted in this village. As the first village in the state to possess its waste management system with more than 600 biogas plants have been installed up till now [16].

4.5. Agricultural and Farm Tourism Village:

Agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and 85% of the population is directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture whereas 26 percent of GDP comes from agriculture. Rice is the most important cereal and staple food produced and consumed in Kerala. Advantages of agri-tourism bring major primary sector agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. Kumbalangi is known for pokkalifarming. Pokkali is a unique variety of protein-rich rice that is cultivated in water-logged coastal regions. The farmers alternate between rice and fish or prawns each for six months a year, based on the salinity of the water. As a farm tourism destination certain amount of locals are depending on a fish farm, agriculture, and small-scale dairy farms at home for living. Kumbalangi Model Tourism is all set to introduce ginger and turmeric cultivation. It might be the first time that this hill produces are being cultivated in a coastal village. The project is being implemented under the support of the Gramapanchayat and the Kumbalangi Model Tourism

4.4. Eco-Tourism Village:

Kumbalangi has several ecosystems like the mangrove ecosystem and backwater ecosystem. The project is aimed at the promotion of preservation and conservation of the environment. Mangrove conservation of the 'panchayat' is an example. Mangroves act as the breeding centers for many fishes and are home to migratory birds. The amazing array of mangrove cover used to be a haven of prawns, crabs, oysters, and small fishes. The benefit of mangrove restoration witnessed a three-fold increase in fish population, a fall in salinity level, and excellent habitat for birds. Mangroves also help to prevent soil erosion. The Department of Tourism had allotted Rs.5 lakhs for the conservation of mangroves there. The Kumbalanghi panchayat also spent Rs.1.25 lakh, for conducting awareness campaigns, as part of the model tourism village project. Sustained efforts are being made to preserve the environment and ecosystem of

Development Society (KMTDS). Type of home-based or small-scale farming available in the village is pokkali farming, Fish, prawns and crab farm, cattle farming, and poultry farming [17].

4.6. Backwater Tourism Village:

Kumbalangi backwater is a part of Vembanadu lake. Here small canoes are used for fishing and navigate a maze of mangrove forests, which is a unique experience. Tourists get a chance to accompany the local fisherman in their daily outings to the backwaters. "I catch, you fry" style of backwater cruise is also available for the tourists. A cool cruise in a canoe along the backwaters will offer a closer view of the peaceful life in the village. Many package tours and programs are conducting in Kumbalangi. These mainly concentrate on backwater cruising, both in daytime and night, besides boating in the countryside and along the mangrove. Backwater is one of the major tourism products of Kumbalangi. Traditionally used as one of the main transportation alleys, today backwaters offer a rejuvenating experience for tourists visiting Kerala [18]. As part of women's empowerment, women are also trained to operate the country boat.

4.7. Artist Village (Kalagramam):

One of the main attractions of Kumbalangi is the construction of Artist's Village in the middle of the backwater at Kallencheri [15]. It is a stage for the artist to perform various performing arts and temple arts. The art and culture of Kumbalangi portray various dance forms like Kolkali, Parisamuttukali, Kaikottikkali, Margamkali, etc. and martial arts performed like Chavittunadakam with the accompaniment of vocal and instrumental music like Chenda, Panchavadyam, etc. Devavasavili is a unique art form that exist in Kumbalangi and now it is in the stage of extinction. Normally it is not a

performing art. It will perform only at the time of funeral functions [13, 19].

IMPACTS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KUMBALANGHI VILLAGE:

The successful rural tourism project should not be judged by the economic gains but also by the level of improvement of the social justice and growth of social capital as well. Some of the impacts of the development of tourism in Kumbalangi are described here based on the previous reports on Kumbalangi tourism available online [20, 21, 15].

- As a part of tourism development, different projects are developed, which leads to the conservation of dying arts and craft forms and preservation of local people's traditional activities including different kinds of fishing techniques.
- One of the main attractions in the village is the local people and their way of lifestyle. Therefore promotion of tourism brings about an increase in their sources of income.
- Kumbalangi is rich with farms like coconut, crab, prawn, fish, and paddy fields. Bringing tourist attractions as well as Governmental support for such kinds of farming activities helps to increase farm or agricultural productivity.
- As part of the eco-tourism project, mangrove forest cultivation and water ecosystem preservation are mainly focused on the promotion of conservation of the environment. The use of plastic is completely banned here. For environmental protection, an awareness campaign is also conducting.
- The heritage houses and exotic local cuisines are maintained and used for tourism promotion, which helps for environmental preservation.

- Interaction, as well as tourism activities, also help to improve the quality of life of the rural people.
- Preserving farm activities and promotion of homestays instead of hotels maintain an eco-friendly environment.
- Many of the cultural arts are under threat stage. The promotion of these art forms for tourism can protect the cultural heritage.
- Different kinds of tourism promotion activities will demand more human resources with educational qualities, which will bring about quality education as well as job opportunities for the people in Kumbalangi.
- Promotion of Tourism village leads to the development of infrastructural facilities in the place such as construction and maintenance of roads and canals, development of walkways and boat jetties, Installation of street lamps, good sanitation facilities and waste disposal facilities, etc.
- Private investment is the other added advantage. The construction of resorts and floating hotels that are suitable to the location provide number of employment for residents.
- The increase in homestays generated several employment opportunities for women especially in food preparation and housekeeping, contrary to hotels and resorts which seek qualified personnel.
- Kumbalangi tourism project aimed at the empowerment of women by marketing the products generated by units of women (eg: Kudumbasree unit, Ayalkootam etc) who were provided training in handicraft making, driving auto-rickshaws, and operating country boat cruises.
- Women have the skills for traditional techniques related to coconuts such as coir making, leaf weaving, and copra processing. Promotions of this kind of tourism help for the protection of traditional techniques and

the establishment of small-scale industries in the village.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Tourism has the potential to be an intensely human experience as well as an extremely consumerist one. The success of future tourism is connected with how the industry and the tourism system understand and incorporate the emerging critical trends that support its expansion. Rural tourism program is an effective measure for rural development and raising the standard of living of the rural folk. The Government has to survey the countryside of Kerala spread over highland, midland, and coastal plain regions and identify villages that have unique features for attracting tourists. Select only a few villages in each district that can provide unique and qualitative rural tourism. Provide basic amenities such as better roads, electrification, drinking water supply, health and sanitation facilities, hygienic comfort stations, better accommodation facilities, etc. Draft a Tourism Master Plan for each such chosen village in consultation with the local panchayath, community organizations, and development agencies. Give earnest care to preserve the biodiversity and local cultural traditions while implementing plans and programs. Take the local community into confidence by suitable participation program and they must feel that the project is part of a development activity that is meant to eradicate rural poverty and unemployment. Shape convenient tourism packages concerning each rural tourism project and attract domestic and foreign tourists by national, international publicity. The progress of the project must be evaluated and effective measures must be undertaken to make them highly receptive to tourists. In this manner, a complete socio-economic development through tourism particularly in rural areas can be established.

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