

## CHAPTER 1

### RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA : DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGIES

1.1 **Introduction.** Majority of Indians live in rural India. Rural India suffers from poverty, unemployment, lack of education, shortages of energy and civic amenities, etc. Since independence, India has taken on long strides in economic development, however, rural India has benefitted marginally from economic policies and developmental plans of the Central and State Governments as the growth had not been inclusive. Government of India had initiated various reforms due to economic liberalisation during nineties and later during 1991-92 leading to quantum improvements in economic indicators such as the balance of payments, growth in services, enhancement in accumulation of foreign exchange reserves, higher growth of exports, improvements in energy sector, information and communication technology, telecommunications, air and surface transport sectors, etc. However, the impact of reforms/policies on important indicators such as economic growth and other macro variable like poverty, inequality, human development, employment, etc has not been equitable as per the progress in other sectors. In rural areas other than agricultural activities, cottage industries and dairy farming have contributed immensely to rural development. There exists a huge potential in our rural areas for their further economic prosperity and development. Tourism is one of the underdeveloped/ untapped sectors in major part of rural India. The Government of India had initiated various measures for giving a boost to rural tourism as part of Tourism policy 2002. The incredible India campaign which projected rural India as a tourist destination along with heritage, cultural and eco tourism was a major success. However, current tourism policies and plans have not yielded desired outcomes for the economic prosperity of our rural communities due to gaps between planning and implementation.

1.2. **Statement of the problem.** Tourism policies and developmental strategies have contributed marginally for the economic development of rural India and the vast potential of tourism in rural sector remains unexploited. Therefore, there is a need to examine and evaluate various initiatives, policies and strategies for tourism development in rural India.

1.3. **Objectives of Research.**

(a) To critically examine and analyse various Government of India policies for development of tourism in rural India in the backdrop of the current socio economic condition of rural India.

(b) Identify existing gaps between planning and implementation and recommend measures for enhancing effectiveness of tourism activities for economic growth of rural sector.

1.4. **Justification.** In Indian Constitution tourism as a charter/subject has not been listed either in Union list or State list or Concurrent list leading to lack of coordination between the Ministry of Tourism, State Governments and other stakeholders. Various tourism policies/guidelines of Government of India suffer from gaps in planning and execution. The gaps are more evident in case of rural tourism since village panchayats/local governments are also stakeholders. Therefore, a holistic review of tourism policies and activities for rural sector is required in this context. The outcome/recommendations of the study would be of utility to all the stakeholders.

1.5. **Research Questions.**

(a) What have been various Government of India initiatives and strategies for development of rural tourism in India?

(b) Are there any inadequacies in organisational structure for tourism management and gaps in planning and execution of policies at various levels of tourism management?

(c) What aspects and issues be incorporated in the organisational structures and policies to optimally utilise the latent potential of rural India for tourism?

1.6. **Methodology.** The study focuses on issues pertaining to rural tourism in India in general and its developmental strategies in particular. The research is descriptive and exploratory in nature. The sources of data collection would be both primary and secondary as follows:-

- (a) Analysis of secondary data obtained through Articles, Journals and Publications.
- (b) Interactions with various stakeholders including officials, professionals, tour operators, tourists, rural communities, service providers, owners, etc.
- (c) Case studies and field visits for evaluation of various contributory factors for success or failure of rural tourism projects.

1.7. **Scope.** The scope of the dissertation would include review of the current status of rural tourism in India to include effectiveness of organizations, policies, role of various stakeholders, gaps in planning and execution and impact on the social, economic and cultural aspects. As also, recommend remedial measures for optimisation of tourism activities in rural sector for economic growth.

1.8. **Limitations.** Constraints of time and inadequacy of interactions with various stakeholders in detail imposes limitations for a holistic and detailed research.

1.9. **Chapterisation scheme.** Various chapters are planned is as follows:-

- (a) **Chapter 1.** Research objectives (including statement of the problem, scope, research question and methodology).
- (b) **Chapter 2.** Review of Literature.
- (c) **Chapter 3.** Rural sector socio-economic analysis and prospects for tourism development.
- (d) **Chapter 4.** Development aspects of rural tourism.
- (d) **Chapter 5.** Tourism Sector in India : An Overview.
- (f) **Chapter 6.** Developmental strategies for tourism sector in India.
- (g) **Chapter 7.** Case studies.
- (h) **Chapter 8.** Findings and recommendations.