



Community Based Tourism in Bundelkhand Region: Potentialities and Prospects

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Abstract

For the improvement of rural economies, Community-based tourism is considered to be one of the finest plans. CBT can help a community can generate various social, cultural and economic benefits. Community based tourism is used for the development of local communities. As far as tourism particularly religious tourism of Bundelkhand region is concerned, the places like Khajuraho, Orchha, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Gwalior, are the main tourist attractions of the region where foreign tourists as well as indigenous tourists regularly visit for religious and non-religious reasons. The contribution of these destinations in local tourism economy and domestic tourist arrivals is important. Bundelkhand region has lot of cultural and natural tourism resources. However, we fail to get optimum output due to lake of proper advertising management and marketing. In this paper, Community based tourism and its benefits are discussed. As well as attitude and perception of community of Bundelkhand towards the growth of CBT is also discussed.

Keywords: Community based tourism, rural tourism, heritage, economic dimension, community participation, Bundelkhand tourism.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry is the prospective economic sector to develop India at a larger rate and make sure of the consequential growth of the infrastructure at the destinations. It can capture and capitalize country's success in the services sector and contribute sustainable models of development. Tourism in Bundelkhand has the prosperous potential to motivate other economic continuum through its forward and backward connections with a host of sectors like agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality, education, transport, banking, health, etc. investment on tourism persuades a chain of transactions requiring supply of goods and services from these associated sectors. Tourism not only helps in boosting the economy but it also creates large employment in that area. So the expenditure in tourism is not the wastage of money, it helps in employment, additional income etc. Therefore, with the expansion of Community-based tourism in Bundelkhand; it will help in poverty mitigation and can generate large scale employment. With the development of tourism industry, the benefits will be in the form of national and state revenue, buoyancy in state and central tax receipts, employment and salary income. Community based tourism will contribute in the overall socio-economic development of the region. [1]

Rural Tourism

Many rural communities have turned to tourism as a way to diversify their economic base. Rural communities aim to turn themselves from an economy of commodity production to a place of consumption while setting up or expanding a tourism industry. Tourism industry can always have a positive contribution in the economy, but sometimes its results or outcomes may not be positive. It can give loss sometimes. Rather than this, sometimes tourism can become exploitative and can result zero in the desired economic boost in Bundelkhand. The approach of community-based tourism (CBT) in Bundelkhand has been proposed because it is more compatible with the rural context.



Sometimes the negative impact of tourism can be much more in urban area as compared to rural area. [2]

For the establishment of CBT in rural areas, government planners or private tourism developers communicate with the local community of tourism development. The locals and communities of Bundelkhand should actively participate in the development of CBT. The nature and extent of participation of locals in Bundelkhand's tourism growth differs significantly, from degrees of tokenism to total control by community. Taking a CBT approach to the social economy shifts the community's position from one actor in a process enforced by government or private interests to one of the entrepreneurial instigators. Compared to types of top-down tourism growth characterized by partial types of involvement, this autonomous growth of the social economy provides community members a stronger degree of autonomy and power. [3]

Tourism history of Bundelkhand

Many places in the Bundelkhand region give evidence by the rock paintings of early man living. The places where rock paintings were found are Panna, Chhatarpur, Datia and Patha region in Chitrakoot. Ramayana gave many descriptions of the jungles of Chitrakoot, where Ram, Lakshman and Sita are believed to have spent twelve years of their exile. Among mercantile classes, Jainism becomes the popular religion in Bundelkhand region. In this region, there are 30 Jain temples of different shapes and sizes. The earliest evidence is on the walls of a hill fort at Deogarh. All these places have their historical importance in Bundelkhand region. Moving from the time to the Ramayana to the Mahabharata, we get the first reference to Bundelkhand as a distinctive political entity. From the ten great Janpadas of the time, Chedi kingdom was one of them. [4]

Chedi kingdom was in the south of Yamuna River and it was also in between two other rivers i.e. Ken and Chambal as per the ancient Sanskrit Literature. Now this area makes



the boundary of Bundelkhand. Humans have no specific knowledge about the Empire of Chedi. In the centuries even before birth of Christ, the age of the Mauryas presents concrete evidence concerning kings and their administrative policies. In a village named Gujarra, 15 kms away from Datia, the Rock Edict of Ashoka is found. [5]

II. COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM

Community- based tourism

Community-based tourism (CBT) is sustainable tourism that is run and managed by the community that is being visited by tourists. Because local people are the decision makers for the tourist destinations, profits go directly to the community. It is used as a tool by rural areas to develop sustainably and CBT is regarded as a preferable approach in many developing countries' development agenda to alleviate poverty while building capacity at the local level. UN World Tourism Organization defined Community based tourism 'as a promising alternative to conventional approaches to development, holistic, participatory and inclusive process that can lead to positive changes in communities by creating large scale employment, mitigation of poverty, stabilizing local economies, restoring the health of natural environment and increasing community control'. The idea of CBT is therefore to foster sustainable development with local empowerment, considering the three dimensions of sustainability: social, environmental and economic. [3]

There is no specific set of boundaries in the term "community" in community-based tourism. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF 2001) states that the social and institutional structures in an area define community. The definition implies, to some extent, a collective responsibility, particularly among those who have collective rights over lands and resources - such as groups of indigenous people. However for Bundelkhand it also indicates that it is necessary to involve as many people as possible since CBT should generate broad and fair benefits throughout the community. [4]

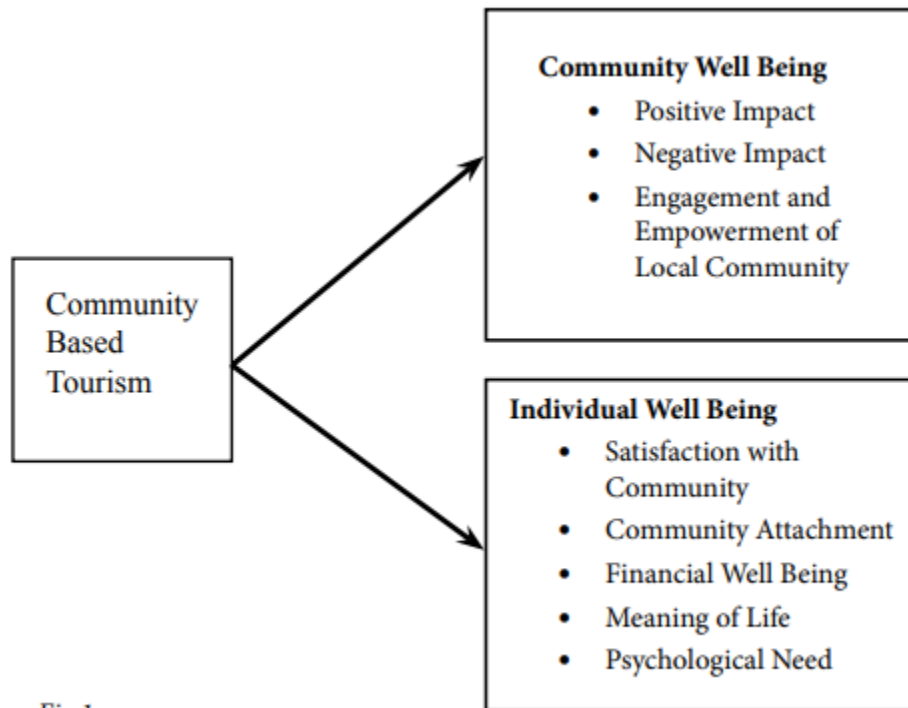


Fig 1

Figure 1: Impact of CBT in community in various parameters

Source:

Benefits of Community Based Tourism in Bundelkhand

Tourism can lead to increase in income opportunities, employment for women, and source of income for disadvantaged groups. Unskilled youth and minority section of the society also gets the positive effect from tourism. Women in rural areas will also become well positioned as providers of tourism services. As women are usually the primary caregivers of households, tourism revenue can have a direct effect on household income and quality of life in rural areas. [2]

Table 1: Benefits through CBT in Bundelkhand

S. No.	Development Areas	Benefits in Bundelkhand
1.	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises quality of life



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes community pride ● Promote gender equality
2.	Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creates employment in tourism ● Increase household income without so much expense ● Generates easy source of fund
3.	Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourages education ● Creates new professions in village ● Promotes mutual respect ● Promotes the acquisition of new job skills
4.	Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes management of waste disposal ● Promotes environmental responsibility ● Raises awareness for conservation for both villagers and tourists
5.	Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourages respect for different culture ● Culture exchange ● Promotion of culture of minorities

III. TOURISM IN BUNDELKHAND

MP is famous for its archaeological sites and it is also a pilgrimage for almost all the religions. MP is a land of earliest tradition and culture. The UNESCO World Heritage site the well-known Sanchi Stupa near Vidisha is a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists. Mahakaleshwar temple in Ujjain is one of the major pilgrimage centers of Hindus. Ujjain



city is situated on the bank of river Kshipra. The capital city of MP, one of the largest mosques in Asia is in Bhopal. And there are various Jain temples all over the state.

Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand region are very well-known for its cultural importance. The rulers were Chandelas and Bundelas. They were known as great builders as they built various palaces, temples and forts. Various temples of lord Shiva can be seen in this region. Ruler of Bundelkhand, Chandela created various ponds also during his reign. These ponds are known as Chandeli-ponds and are used for drinking and irrigation purpose.

Orchha: Orchha is a place in Tikamgarh district, famous for its religious importance. A picturesque view is provided by the various temples of Orchha and a river Betwa in the background. Orchha fort is also very well-known site of tourist attraction.

Datia: Bundelas were the ruler of Datia. It is famous for its palaces and buildings built by the rulers, particularly Virsinghdeo. Some palaces are of unique importance. ‘Saktipeeth’ in Datia is famous for religious worship. Famous Jain temple is also built in Datia. Datia is always known for its cultural, religious and traditional values. For preserving the cultural heritage in Datia, numerous literacy groups and theatrical groups are trying to save them.

Khajuraho: One of the very famous tourist attractions of India is situated in Chhatarpur. The UNESCO World Heritage Site Khajuraho is famous for the range of temples with erotic love-making stone carved scenes on the outside walls. These temples were created by the Chandela kings before the birth of Bundela in that region.

Panna: Chhatrashal, the prominent Bundela leader, had declared Panna his capital. Chhatarpur district is renamed after him. The City of Temples is recognized as Panna. There is a legendary tale that Saint Prabhunath advised his disciple, Chhatrashal, that whatever region is occupied by him sitting upon its horse on a fateful night, the diamond



mine would be located underneath the ground. So are the mines of diamonds at Panna.
[4]

Culture and Heritage

Culture and Heritage had a powerful influence in north central India and so the whole area was named Bundelkhand. Evidence to the rich cultural architecture and traditions are the monuments located in the region. Kings from the Bundela clan, Maratha Peshwas, Mughals, who ruled Jhansi together has inspired the cultural heritage in different types of art and folk dances in its prominent territory. Folk dances, which are an significant part of local people's lives, often properly reflect their culture. [5] In marriages and often even at birth, the Badhai dance is usually performed. The Akai dance style is influenced by martial arts, and when playing it, performers use bamboo sticks. The Norta dance portrays in which the former still prevails, the war between positive and negative aspects. It is said that the Rai dance is influenced by the motion of a mustard seed in a saucer. To indicate a good crop, the Jawara dance is usually performed. To show their dedication to Lord Krishna, the Diwali dance is customarily performed by boys clothed as cowherds a fortnight prior Diwali. Jhansi places a huge focus on music and dance, even with passion and religious zeal; the natives participate, bursting into a dance on every occasion. However, it is evident that Jhansi associates itself as Bundeli customs, rituals and cultural norms because of its geographical location and similar cultures. For completely these causes, Jhansi is recognized as the “Gateway to Bundelkhand”. [6]

Folk culture forms of Bundelkhand

Several folk skills have grown through regional festivals, such as 'Navami' paintings and designs created in the monsoons on the event of Kajri Navami. In a dim area of the house wherein women arrange cups made of leaves containing soil from a specific area, the sketches are created with a mixture of pounded rice upon the floor washed with cow dung. In the cups, seedlings of grain or barley are grown and venerated for fifteen days.



Only then the sowing operations begin. Achri, a type of folk music performed particularly during Navratri in front of the mother goddesses. On Diwali, Diwari dances are performed by gymnastic male groups carrying long poles and wearing very vibrant and extraordinary attire.

Bundeli Utsav (Bundeli Festival) is a cultural festival to encourage the traditional arts of Bundeli (Bundelkhandi), organized in Basari village, Tehsil Rajnagar, Chhatarpur district, Madhya Pradesh , India, for seven days beginning from Basant Panchmi each year during the early spring. It is arranged by Bundeli Vikas Sansthan, an NGO with the aim of carrying out various social events and promoting the tradition and culture of Bundeli, with the assistance of the Department of Culture of the Government of Madhya Pradesh and also the Madhya Pradesh State Tourism Development Corporation. At this festival, numerous folk art contests, folk dances, folk music, food festivals, traditional games and archery activities are organised.

Taste of Bundelkhand

Wonderful Bundelkhand is a mountainous region, split between the U.P. and M.P. states. In addition to its historic importance, Bundelkhand houses Khajuraho, Fort of Jhansi, a UNESCO World Heritage site and, among others, the only diamond mine with in region. As fascinating as its tradition, Bundelkhand food seems. The dishes traditionally originated from the tribes in Madhya Pradesh, Jhansi and Indore's jungle regions. The warmth and food never fails to amaze when it gets to Bundelkhand. If you fail to eat something from the dishes offered, you will find people fussing at you, pushing alternate dishes and helping you. The ideal "Mehman-nawazi" is believed to be like that. The cuisine comes out to be amazingly delicious with a great combination of spices, fragrance, and other ingredients. Some of the popular dishes from the Bundelkhand region are Bhutte ka khees, Khopra paak, Raas ki kheer. In this area , people mostly prefer vegetarian food because of its religious value. [7]



IV. POTENTIAL FOR PROGRESS IN BUNDELKHAND

Bundelkhand has an identity etched by historical circumstance, due to a series of common rulers, who even though they did not have a distinct administrative or revenue system, did bring a sense of region-hood to this area. It was during the reign of the Chandelas that the social and cultural identity of the region was established and nurtured through folk music, dance, painting, sculpture and poetry. In terms of human development, education levels are low, health indicators are poor, incomes are low; and poverty and deprivation is high. Enhancing CBT can become one of the solutions for this problem. CBT can help women for their overall development and the income from tourism will provide them self-satisfaction and confidence. [4]

Area of tourism can be developed giving the historical richness and natural beauty of the region. The region has a huge number of historical tourism sites, such as palaces, forts, etc. The region has 277 protected archaeological sites (173 in UP-Bundelkhand, and 104 in MP Bundelkhand). It is not just the number of monuments and historical sites; Bundelkhand houses two of the nation's most attractive tourist destinations and both remain under developed. The first of these two sites is the Khajuraho cluster, which is synonymous with Indian tourism, both internationally and nationally, and yet the facilities here are not adequate and the average tourist days spent are just one or two. The supporting tourist activities are missing, and the site is unable to attract tourists for more than a few days. The other cluster is around Chitrakoot, one of India's principal centers for religious tourism. Once again, the infrastructure is poor, and there are no facilities for high-spending tourists and almost no supporting activities. The potential in tourism remains unexplored.[8]

Being in the center of India, with good connectivity the second area of promise is developing Bundelkhand region as a logistical hub. If it can generate enough



warehousing and transport related infrastructure, its locational advantage can be exploited. Adequate schemes promoting investments in this regard already exist and an aggressive effort to make this a logistic hub can develop this sector substantially.

V. PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE OF COMMUNITY TOWARDS CBT IN BUNDELKHAND

Knowledge of Bundelkhand locals' perceptions in the direction of tourism development is highly required in order to know the significance and value of local participation. Instead of being a group of people with conflicting emotions in regards to their view of tourism, cultures are not homogeneous groups of like-minded people. Investigation into the past of local views of the growth of tourism can also aid planners in a significant manner. This will be simpler to choose those innovations that can reduce negative social impacts and increase support for alternative modes of tourism that seem to have a meaningful impact on the society of the Bundelkhand area if it is understood why the community members of Bundelkhand supports or opposes tourism growth. Further, it is recommended that to consider local issues and personal values of local communities rather than describing them with demographic variables and factors, will be more supportive when understanding and interpreting community perceptions. In rural communities of Bundelkhand where small economic activity and small tourism development, communities have high potentials for future tourism development, and have hence more positive perceptions towards tourism development. [1]

Most negative perceptions of the local communities of Bundelkhand tend to appear from the following conditions: First, the presence of tourists in tourist destinations, Second, the demonstration effect of tourism development and Third, foreign ownership and employment. Demonstration effect is behavioral effect that occurred on locals. Residents of Bundelkhand frequently attracted by the visible material superiority of visitors and may try to copy their behavior and spending patterns. However, observing and interacting with visitors in tourist places of Bundelkhand can benefit locals as well, if it encourages



local communities to adopt and work for the things they lack in their community. It can lead to the process of development, or it may lead to dependency, reinforcing existing social discrepancy and weak structures.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Community-based tourism is one of the core facets of sustainable tourism development in destinations. This paper takes a closer look at Community Based Tourism in Bundelkhand. The primary reason for tourists to travel is the local communities of the Bundelkhand region, to experience the style of life and materialistic things of different communities. The 'natural' landscapes where many tourists consume are often influenced by local communities. Consequently, tourism can positively promote a community to potential investors and residents as well as visitors. This paper showed a brief conception of community and its involvement in the tourism development in Bundelkhand. Hence, this study can be motivation for futures investigate in local communities base tourism development.

For the enhancement of CBT in regions like Bundelkhand, the development of tourist attractions of Khajuraho and Chitrakoot can provide a stimulus to the local economies of the region. Apart from these two tourist sites, the entire region is strewn with architectural sites that can be developed as tourist destinations. The area of Bundelkhand is filled with historical heritage and attracts tourists who are interested in history, monuments and nature. In view of this aggressive investment opportunities and infrastructural development should immediately be deployed to the area and its surrounding communities to achieve the desire objectives of sustainable religion tourism development in Bundelkhand region in India.

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