



## Five Pillars of Tourism Industry: Conceptualizing Rural Tourism Development

Know Tourism! Understand Tourism!! Grow with Tourism!!!

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### Abstract

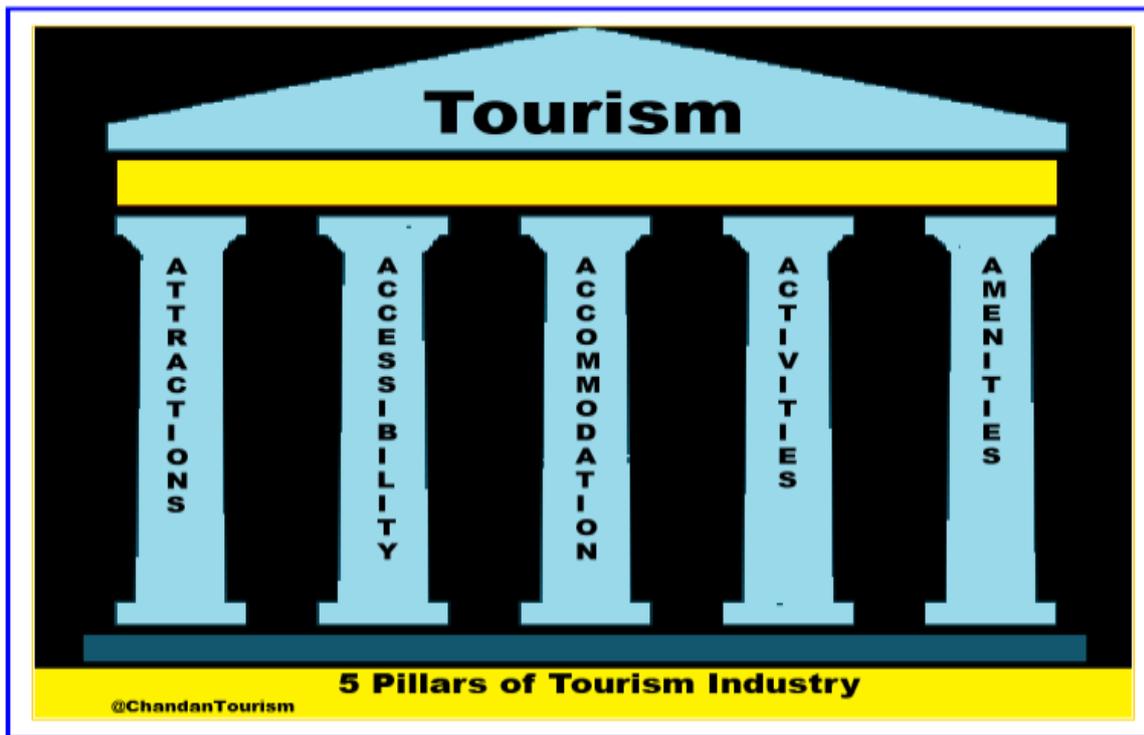
Tourism and the several emerging concepts associated with it are being widely explored in the academic and professional circles in the post-covid times. Few of the factors that Tourism is based on include the culture and the heritage which are prevalent in the rural areas. This paper identifies the five pillars that Tourism as a discipline and an industry depends on during the present circumstances. The concept of Rural Tourism, if appropriately discovered, provides the best resources at a minimal price. The local flavours and the scenarios are the best in its natural surroundings and it only remains to be seen how one can use them for the enhancement of Tourism industry. This paper provides an insight into how the natural resources can be tapped to improve Rural Tourism and the Local Economy.

**Keywords:** Rural, Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation, Activities, Amenities

### Introduction

Tourism industry in India has been contributing to the national economy in ways more than one. There are different types of Tourism that can be explored according to the circumstances and the locales. However, one concept stands apart from the rest, given the nature of its resources. And that is Rural Tourism. With its variegated dimensions, Rural Tourism provides some of the best natural resources for the Tourism business to flourish. The availability of the resources varies from one place to another; nevertheless, one can easily understand the simple idea that these are natural resources and can be utilized at a minimal price. If these resources are maintained and utilized well, Rural Tourism can flourish in India. Especially in the post-covid scenario, if the rural people are appropriately educated regarding the optimal utilization of the natural resources available in their area, they can contribute to the Local as well as the National economy. This paper analyses the Five Pillars of the Tourism Industry that can aid in the development of Rural Tourism. The three important coherently-thought hypothesis for the same would be Know Tourism, Understand Tourism and Grow with Tourism.

## The Five-Pillar Model



## Know Tourism

Tourism is a way to relax our mind and body from the everyday stress. It gives new life to our senses and makes the mind creative by recharging it through the natural settings accessible in rural India. Tourists belong to that special category of people who like to experience new lifestyles and fall in love with nature again and again. Rural Tourism gives a perfect blend of nature and culture, offering tourists the most pleasant natural settings along with the rich cultural practices of the indigenous communities in the countryside. Rural India also offers tourists a unique blend of traditional agricultural practices, organic food, rural games etc.

## Understand Tourism

The concept of Tourism culminated on 5 pillars gives a clear idea in understanding Tourism industry. The 5 pillars are Attractions, Accessibility, Accommodation, Activities & Amenities.

**Attractions** play a major role in bringing tourists to the destination and encouraging them to spend money. To reach a destination, tourists need transportation, which is **Accessibility**. Once the tourist reaches the destination, they need **Accommodation** to take rest and refresh themselves to continue their journey. The **Activities** are an additional advantage for the tourists to spend more time in that destination and spend more money. Last but not the least, the **Amenities**, which are the basic essentials to meet the tourists' needs, should be perfect.



**Attractions:** The first and most important pillar is Attraction without which no one will ever think about travelling. There should be something for the tourists which should attract and bring them towards the Tourism destination. Attractions can be Natural, Man-made or Symbiotic.

Natural Attractions could be Waterfalls – Jog Falls, Hill Stations – Nandi Hills, Beaches – Malpe Beach, Adventure trekking – Kudhuremukha, Devarayanadurga etc.

Man-made Attractions could be Heritage Buildings – Mysore Palace, Fairs and Festivals – Mysore Dasara Festival, Handicrafts – Channapatna Toys, Gastronomy – Mysore Pak, Music and Dance – Karnataka *Shastriya Sangeetha*, *Yakshagana* etc.

Symbiotic Attractions could be Theme Parks – GRS Fantasy Park, Zoo – Mysore Zoo, National Parks & Wildlife Sanctuaries – Bannerghatta National Park & Bhadra Wildlife Sanctuary etc.

**Accessibility:** Tourists who select particular Tourism attractions and destinations need to travel to reach it. This is the second important pillar of Tourism, that is, accessibility. Transportation comes in a variety of ways which can be classified extensively as Air Travel, Surface (Water) Travel and Land Travel systems.

Air Travel is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. It connects almost all the parts of the world and it has also contributed in making the whole world a single village. Tourists can now enjoy low cost Airlines for budget and luxury Airlines for premium services and reach Tourism destinations with more satisfaction and happiness.

Water Transportation includes Cruise Ships, House Boats and smaller boats that cross rivers in any Tourism destination. Tourists can enjoy while travelling in these water-based transportations available in the Tourism industry.

Land Travel includes the most exciting ways of transportation like Luxury Train – Golden Chariot, Hop-on-Hop-off bus to local *Tuk-Tuk*. Land transportation helps tourists to reach destinations and also in local transfers.

**Accommodation:** When the Tourism destinations are filled with many options to explore, tourists need to take rest to continue their adventure. Accommodation plays a major role in holding tourists back at Tourism destinations which in turn allows tourists spend more money so that the local community will get benefitted.

‘Home-away-from-home’ is what tourists expect when they check-in a hotel. Accommodation industry caters to all kind of tourists who look for budget stays to luxury stays. New concepts like Homestays, Camping etc. are also attracting lot of tourists towards it.

**Activities:** In this ever-changing world, one attraction at one destination is not enough and it needs to be diversified. Tourists should be given options to explore and experience various



Tourism activities in and around particular Tourism destinations. Activities can be divided into Air-based, Water-based and Land-based activities.

Air-based adventure Tourism activities attract millions of tourists all around the world. Sky diving, Bungee Jumping, Gliding etc. are activities that provide tourists an indulgence in spending extra time and money which will support the local economy.

Water-based Tourism activities attract tourists all over the world. This includes Surfing, Sailing, Angling etc.

Land-based Tourism activities include some of the most exciting adventure activities like Trekking, Mountaineering, Rock Climbing etc.

**Amenities:** Any Tourism destination needs basic facilities for which the whole idea of Tourism destination stands. Providing tourists the minimum facilities will make a very big impact on the success of that Tourism destination.

Providing tourists with basic facilities like washrooms, parking, seating areas, security, ATM, Restaurants etc. will certainly help in the development of Tourism in those destinations.

## Grow with Tourism

When the Tourism industry conceptualized on the five pillars of Tourism is understood perfectly; based on the Tourism business model selected, the importance to be given to each pillar can be comprehended. This understanding elucidates the specific areas that can make a big difference if they are focused on while doing Tourism business.

Starting a Tourism business happens when one has understood the basics of the Tourism industry which are explained in the previous paragraphs. Based on the available finances, individual interests and the resources available, one can select any Tourism business under the 5-pillar concept.

**Attractions** need not always be a palace or a monument or a heritage site; a theme-based homestay or resort can be an attraction in itself. Creating a Mini-Europe, like the one found in Brussels, Europe or the Windows of the World, Shenzhen, China or the Grand Canyon, Skywalk in USA, or Sardar Vallabhai Patel statue in Kevadiya, Gujarat can be tourist attractions and the tourists will swarm the place. For instance, Local Business can be improved in Channapatna by constructing a museum for the toys that are made in Channapatna, which can attract tourists. Agricultural activities/equipments can be kept for display and such unique display museums can be started according to the availability of the resources. By constructing Sand museum, Horror house, Wax museum and by creating a village lifestyle, Tourism business can be started. For instance, Melukote (in Karnataka) houses a Sanskrit library wherein the inscriptions of Hoysalas, Chalukyas etc. written on palm leaves are preserved and displayed and the local ingredients are used for making spice/*masala* powders for cooking purposes and they can be sold to the tourists too. Places



like Kancheepuram, Thanjavur and Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu significantly mark the stories about the local gods/goddesses/religion/culture and they can also be converted into tourist attractions.

With regard to **accessibility**, eco-friendly, battery-run vehicles, bullock carts, horse rides or *tuk-tuks* can be used to start travel business. If the tourist destination is a water spot, small boats or *theppa* (coracle) can be used to cross rivers/streams. They are used in Hampi, Hogganakkal falls etc. Cycles/bikes can be provided on rent to explore the area. Providing cable cars can be a means of accessibility and a business in mountainous/hilly regions.

Business in the **accommodation** sector could be as simple as providing camping sites with tents and Motels which facilitate tourists with a comfortable stay. The tourists can stay in homestays and resorts and enjoy the experience provided there. Homestay business, for instance, can be started with a family taking care of it; therefore, no new buildings are necessary. The tourists can be facilitated with a room found in the home, by decorating it using the local themes/lifestyles, displaying local artefacts, handicrafts etc. Each of these will add value to the homestay and the experience the tourists can enjoy. Food can be the local cuisine. In fact, the real essence of homestay can be experienced through the local cuisines. Tourists should be motivated to spend more time in such homestays, so that they spend more money by buying the traditional food, the snacks, the handicrafts, artefacts etc., involve in pottery, create a place where they can take photos, with an innovative studio-like appearance for capturing photos. There is no necessity to invest more, no need to hire anyone; a single family can start a homestay business.

**Activities**-based businesses can be either land-based, water-based or air-based. They can be local activities or even agri-based. Trekking/rock climbing/hiking are common activities. Guides who are familiar with the place can explain the culture/tradition of the place to the tourists. Bicycle-tour of the area, angling/coracles/boat rides in the lakes/ponds, air-based activities like bungee jumping/sky diving/gliding/Zipline/cable cars/parachuting/kites/hot air balloons are all different activities that can be pursued in the tourist destinations.

**Amenities** include facilitating tourists with parking facilities/washrooms/beach rest rooms/restaurants and useful items like umbrellas/toys/swim suits/ other such things necessary for use in the tourist destinations. The government should provide signboards for proper connectivity within the place of stay. Other amenities include relaxing places/seating area/ATM facilities near by the tourist destination/shades where refreshments can be given. The local products like tender coconuts/sugar cane juice/*majjige* (buttermilk), pink-hot-water boiled with the *pathimugam* redwood soaked in water for medicinal purposes to prevent kidney disorders/skin diseases etc. can also generate income. The local people can start business by making hats using coconut leaves or coir or bamboo and by making bags with the weeds found in river or the lake side. Photographers can involve in business by capturing beautiful and scenic photos and selling them to the tourists; a licensed guide can facilitate tourists with information about that area, translators can engage in translated explanations of the place; small pamphlets/notes based on the culture of the local places can be sold to the



tourists; selling mineral water bottles are also part of amenities. However, a professional touch should be given to such activities in an impressive manner so that the tourists are comfortable and happy and would want to get back to the place again and again.

## Conclusion

Rural Tourism can thus provide a plethora of opportunities for the development of the Indian Tourism Industry. The business engagements available for Rural Tourism can help improve the Local and the National Economy. Maintenance and optimal utilization of the Natural resources can help the Rural Tourism industry in a very big way. The five pillars discussed above will certainly aid in re-conceptualizing the Rural Tourism industry. The local flavours and the scenarios are the best in its natural surroundings and the Central/State Government and the Local authorities should learn and understand how the natural resources can be tapped to improve Rural Tourism and the Local Economy.

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