

Ecotourism Potential and Management in PKN, WLS in Udaipur District of southern Rajasthan

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ABSTRACT

Ecotourism is an emerging concept that conserves natural resources through the socio-economic development of local communities. Generally protected areas and reserved forests are mainly located in remote areas, where local people, mainly Tribes are depend on natural resources for their survival. The development of ecotourism sites leads not only to economic development, but also to social and cultural development. PKN, WLS is hunting a prohibited and protected area located in Kotra tehsil of Udaipur district in Rajasthan and has a high probability of developing as an ecotourism site. Ecotourism in the PKN region will be able to create employment opportunities for the local people and improve the standard of living of the participants. Successful ecotourism planning and implementation will bring social empowerment through community participation, community cohesion, infrastructure improvement and cultural awareness. Socially and economically operative, culturally unconventional and environmentally sustainable, there is a need to formulate better and stricter policies to target profitable ecology in PKN.

Key words: Community, Conservation, Local, Protected area, Sustainable, Wildlife and Nature.

INTRODUCTION

Rajasthan is a country of geographical varieties. Rajasthan is full of cultural and natural things, which is more than we imagined. It offers many tourist destinations, which not only distance us from urban life, but thrill us in many ways to enjoy Mother Nature in its pristine way. The cultural and natural wealth of Rajasthan is safe and protected at the hands of mankind. The beautiful environment is still untouched by human greed for the land. Tourism can have a positive economic impact on the balance of payments, on employment, on gross income and production, but especially on the environment.

The forests of Rajasthan cover an area of 32845.30 sq km, which is 9.597 percent of the total geographical area of the state, and most of the area is unevenly spread over the northern, southern-eastern and southern parts of the state. Most of the forest is in hilly areas. There are in Udaipur, Baran, Pratapgarh, Sirohi, Karoli, Alwar, Chittorgarh, Rajsamand, Kota and Banswara districts, which make up about 60 percent of the state's forests. These dense natural forests are mostly confined to various national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

Southern Rajasthan is an important physical unit of the state, it has a complex topography in the lap of the Aravalli mountain ranges, which are characterized by distinct plateaus, hills, forests, ridges and lakes. Udaipur, Rajsamand, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh and Pratapgarh districts of Rajasthan are jointly known as Mewar. Two of the nearest southern districts, Banswara and Dungarpur, are jointly known as Vagad. The eastern part of Sirohi and Pali districts, close to the Aravalli mountain range, the border of Mewar region is called Godwad. The entire region adjoining the state of Mewar, Vagad and Godwad is surrounded by forest, which is called Southern Rajasthan.

In recent decades there are new trends of tourism like rural tourism, medical tourism eco tourism etc. Today, the global tourism sector is facing the COVID-19 epidemic. In such a situation tourism and rural development are more relevant than ever. Tourism in rural areas plays an important role for recovery. This gives momentum to supportive communities facing the economic and social impacts of rural communities. In this sequence, Ecotourism is an activity through which the goal of economic and social development can be achieved without compromising the natural ecosystem and biodiversity in protected areas.

Review of Related Studies

To review the status of research and development in the subject, no significant work has been done so far.

According to **Sharma**, many exotic plant species are found in the forests and uninhabited areas of southern Rajasthan. Increased network of roads, urbanization, increasing agriculture, mining, declining water governance, soil erosion, degradation of grasslands, encroachment in forest areas etc. are other major ecological problems of the region which are a threat to the rich biodiversity.

According to **Ahmad, (2013)** ecotourism must have a strong “people element”. For example, the travellers should learn about the forest and its people. They should also learn the causes of destruction of the rainforests. The project must also be built through the cooperative action of a variety of key groups because failure to involve even a single group may result in destruction of the resource.

According to **Meena and Saran, (2017)** only 12–13 percent of the Earth's surface is covered by national parks and other conservation areas. For conservation, there is a need to create a network between biologists, research, forest departments and local people for effective technology applications. One such alternative is community-based ecotourism. Environmental tourism with proper planning will help in the conservation of the local community as well as the important biodiversity area. The local people, along with the government, will also have to take initiative to promote the development of ecotourism. It is therefore necessary that protected areas endowed with biodiversity are managed through methods of conservation of biodiversity.

According to **Foundation for Ecological Security, (2010)** Phulwari-ki-Nal Wildlife Sanctuary and its forest is true representative of Aravalli hills and has various geological formations of ancient era that harbor some of the specialist floral species. This sanctuary has not been assessed ecologically and in terms of biodiversity earlier, thus necessitates a systematic assessment of biological diversity for a better conservation and sustainable management of natural resources.

According to **Arya and Bagaria**, Whenever approached for getting an overall picture of the status of tourism in the state, the Department of Tourism generally provides the records of tourist arrivals, its achievements, information of participation in fair & festivals, and introductory information of RTDC. It is not enough. This only indicates whether the tourist trend is growing or

declining in the state. Even information on various aspects of travel of the tourists, their perception, and expectations are not yet properly maintained by the Department of Tourism, which stands as a great barrier in carrying out any systematic study on this sector.

According to **Go and Kang,(2020)** the ecotourism project at Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary (BFMS) is a Community-based Ecotourism (CBE) project that has become a popular and fast-growing environmentally friendly segment of the tourism industry in Central Ghana, Africa. The Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary's Community-based Ecotourism project is managed and controlled mainly by the community members in the communities of Boabeng and Fiema.

Purpose of the study

Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the backdrop of the Aravalli hills, is an emerging, immense potential tourist destination. But so far the Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary is promoting and developing various aspects of ecotourism through natural resources. And very little effort has been made to generate livelihood and employment generation of local communities. Therefore, the proposed study will try to achieve the following objectives-

- To throw light on the scope of eco-tourism in the place of PKN,WLS
- To analyze eco-tourism development and local employment generation in the place of PKN,WLS
- Developing strategies to develop eco-tourism and increase local employment generation

Study hypothesis

- H1-Ecotourism will reduce migration of tribal communities by providing economic options to local people
- H2-environmental knowledge positively affects environmental attitudes
- H3-Environmental awareness will help in reducing the distance of human from the natural environment
- H4- The number of tourists to Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary will increase if proper strategy is implemented

Research Methodology

This article is based on primary and secondary data. Based on the data received, the related literature review and internet sources compiled and analyzed the material for the concept of local employment creation with environmental tourism development in Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary. The research method is divided into the following steps

- Study based on primary and secondary data
- Comprehensive survey of related literature
- To provide a strategy for development of eco-tourism and creation of local employment in Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary.

Study area – PKN, WLS of Kotra tehsil at Udaipur District

This study has been done in Phulwari-ki-nal wildlife sanctuary located in the most southern part of Rajasthan. And situated in the middle of the Aravalli hill range, this region is unique and diverse in itself.

These sanctuaries are Phulwari-ki-nal Wildlife Sanctuary (PWLS), which belongs to the forests of North Gujarat region, is located in Udaipur district. It lies between 24°– 24° 10'N latitude and 73°20' E longitude. The sanctuary has 11 forest blocks with an area of 511.41 km², comprising 365.92 km² of reserved forest (RF) and 145.49 km² of protected forest (PF). It is well preserved, covering the entire range of habitats in the Aravalli hills. PKN is ecologically important as it is part of the largest viable forest tract among the fragmented forest belt of Rajasthan.

Entertainment opportunities for the tourist

Environmental tourism is also very important for the welfare of mankind as well as for the planet Earth. Through this, environmental protection and economic development of local people is possible. Along with this, cultural awareness also develops. Recreation in Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary adequate possibilities of activities are found, which takes you closer to nature and helps in understanding the natural life more thoroughly. These activities are as follows-

- **Tour of natural beauty** - Tour of rich wildlife (hiking, bicycles, horse riding, jeep) to experience the flora and fauna.
- **Adventure Activities** - There are many valleys located here where many adventure activities can be conducted which will attract the sports enthusiasts like boating, river rafting (in the month of July-August) bungee jumping, trekking, camping, hot air balloon, Paragliding, rope way etc.
- **Tribal tourism** - This is a tribal majority area where the Bhil, Meena, Garasia and Kathodi tribes are living with their rich tribal culture and tradition.
- **Study** - study of flora and fauna and bird supervision.
- **Environmental Awareness** - To organize awareness among students for organizing natural camps. Relaxing in the natural environment through appropriate activities,

natural excursions of wildlife, adventurous excursions and looking for a glimpse of folk culture will definitely benefit the tourists.

Strategy for development of eco-tourism in the place of PKN, WLS

This research paper attempts to highlight the untapped potentials of PKN, Wildlife Sanctuary. The number of tourists visiting the city of Udaipur, the main attraction center of Rajasthan is more than other areas, but only 123 kilometers from Udaipur. But the number of tourists in PKN, WLS is relatively low. An appropriate strategy should be prepared for this region with immense potential so as to increase the number of steady and regular domestic and foreign tourists as well as economic development and environmental of local communities. To promote awareness:

- Getting appropriate information related to the sanctuary on the state tourism map
- Using colorful brochures, folders, guides, park literature, and audio films
- To install sanctuary signage boards and park literature at other sightseeing places.
- Important flora should be labeled features and paintings of animals and birds to be placed in places where there is a strong possibility of seeing them
- Creating view points to view natural and scenic views
- Organizing cultural programs by local artists at Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary, wherein tribal culture, food, handicrafts art can be seen.
- Setting up various workshops to encourage handicraft art for local communities
- Facilities - Transport, Housing, Traffic, Food, Drinking Water Facility
- Proper care and sanitation of tourist places.

PKN, WLS : Major Problems and Solutions of the Region

PKN, WLS with immense potential is one of the few selected sanctuaries in Rajasthan, where rich variety of medicinal plants along with rich vegetation and wildlife and birds are found. There are a total of 134 villages in the sanctuary and its outlying areas. It is directly and indirectly dependent on the forests of the sanctuary for its livelihood and sustenance. Presently this sanctuary is facing many problems like-

- Loss of nature's invaluable funds due to lack of proper maintenance and environmental awareness
- Encroachment on forest land due to shortage of forest staff, illegal harvesting of bamboo and well and forest fires (in summer)

- Migration of the original tribal population due to social backwardness, orthodox superstitions, poverty, illiteracy and lack of employment.
- Anti-government attitude of some NGOs
- Frequent drought and wild animals wander due to lack of water

The climate of Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary located in the middle of the Aravalli hills is subtropical and annual rainfall is found to be 730 mm. The Wakal River, the main tributary of the Sabarmati River, is the lifeline of the region. Due to the appropriate climate, teak trees grow here in large numbers. Bamboo is also found here in good quality. The valleys here are full of medicinal plants. A large number of them occupy an important place from the ethomedicinal (plants used in the treatment of skin diseases) approach. Keeping in view the problems and climatic conditions here, the following steps can be taken for local employment in this area-

- To train the tribal groups of the region to make disposable utensils made of teak leaves.
- Motivating for making mats, baskets, decorative items and toys, furniture, clothes, instruments etc. made from bamboo weaving
- Appoint trained people for proper maintenance and use of plants.
- Here the tribal group follows the goat. Therefore, a "goat milk parlor" should be arranged in this area, through which the women of the tribal group can be made financially competent.
- Various businesses generated as a result of development of eco-tourism will prevent youth from seeking employment.

CONCLUSION

After extensive study of available literature and data, it can be concluded that Phulwari's Nal Wildlife Sanctuary located in the backdrop of Aravalli has ample scope to attract environmental tourists. The region is rich in flora, flora variety. Also many species of medicinal plants are also found here. More than 200 species of birds with diverse wildlife are found in this area. Also this area is also a suitable place for adventure sports, where many adventure and Recreational activities can be conducted. The glimpse of rich tribal culture and their life style also attracts tourists especially.

With the development of eco-tourism, it is possible to create employment for the local communities here, as well as establishing various workshops using various natural resources in the area for livelihood and sustainable employment of the tribal groups here in collaboration with the

government and society. , Should be trained for various handicrafts industries so that tribal groups do not migrate and this area is valued by its original culture and natural environment.

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