

# RURAL INDIAN ECONOMICS – SUPPLEMENTING AGRICULTURE WITH TOURISM FOR DEVELOPMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*Rural development is really a point of deep concern in India where majority of population (68%) is still living in villages in condition of extreme poverty untouched by the spree of globalization in the last two decades. An analysis into performance of rural economy reveals that an annual increase of 0.97 percent in employment is lower than the rise in the concomitant rural work force. This paper is an attempt to analyze the situation of the rural India in post- reform period as well as to chart out the necessity of developing Indian tourism in a rural settings by analyzing tourism's contribution in generating brisk employment across local and rural India. Tourism is a vital tool for economic development, employment generation and equitable distribution of income and needs to be encouraged for growth of neglected, remote and rural / backward areas possessing tourism potentials. Tourism in India can ensure significant development in terms of the infrastructure at the destinations, generate local employment, and induce multi- sectoral overall growth of the economy and above all effect the optimum share of global tourist arrivals and earnings that still remains elusive even after active interventions of couple of five year plans.*

**Keywords:** Agri-tourism ,employment , enterprise growth, labour force, local community, own account enterprises(OAE), rural development.

## INTRODUCTION

Rural development is really a point of deep concern in India where majority of population (68%) is still living in villages in condition of extreme poverty, ill- health and illiteracy; and are poorly organized for effective participation in programs of their own welfare. The disempowered populace lack technical knowledge and have no access to resources except human capital for improving their economic condition. Keeping in view the inadequacy and inconsistency that the economy faces, it is essential to pursue a suitable policy with a deliberate rural focus and strategic developmental outreach towards the disadvantaged districts / regions of the economy. The success of rural Indian economy is dependant to a great extent on the growth of agriculture sector with no other considerable alternate sector that may be enriching for the rural Indian economy. Thus any policy measure to be introduced in this sphere has to be taken up in right earnest.

India is the largest democracy with consistent economic growth rate since independence however, with regard to demographic profile one third of its population live in rural areas. Despite the ongoing development, there is a wide gap between rural and urban India with respect to technology, living condition, economic empowerment etc. The total land area of India is 2,973,190 sq.km. of which 70% of area comes under the rural area which comprises of 6,40,867 villages. Out of this, total 5,98,000 are inhabited villages. There are only 7,935 towns and 4,041 urban areas as per the Census of

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India(2011). The **Table 1** discloses how rural population constitute more than two-third of the total population of India. But with respect to other development indicators, rural India is a laggard. Rural India primarily depends on sustainability of the agricultural sector. The growth rate in agricultural sector (primary sector) is 2-3% when compared to secondary and tertiary sector which are growing at the rate of 8-12%. Due to such pull factor, there is a large scale migration of labour forces from rural to urban centres in search of employment thereby also generating the urbanization of poverty as a major concern.

**Table 1:**Population in India

India	Total	Male	Female
Total	1,21,01,93,422	62,37,24,248 (51.5%)	58,64,69,174 (48.5%)
Rural	83,30,87,662 (68.84%)		
Urban	37,71,05,760 (31.16%)		

**Source:** Census of India, 2011

The nation will not really progress unless the rural development is specially taken care off. Globalization in itself is no solution to the rural development. It is essential to have the safety nets for the poor when things go wrong for one reason or another; hence, this paper is an attempt to analyze the situation of the rural India in post-reform period as well as to chart out the necessity of developing Indian tourism in a rural settings.

### TOURISM POTENTIAL IN INDIA

Tourism in India, offering large and diverse range of tourism products all across the length and breadth of the country, still remains quite insignificantly low both in terms of share of the world arrivals and tourism receipts, despite having much larger share in terms of geography, better tourism products and still the more – better prospects of developing man-made tourism. Tourism is being utilized by many underdeveloped / remote areas across the world as the best instrument for growth of neglected, remote and rural / backward areas. Tourism in India can ensure significant development in terms of the infrastructure at the destinations, generate local employment, and induce multi- sectoral overall growth of the economy and above all effect into the optimum share of global tourist arrivals and earnings that still remains elusive.

Tourism business is assumed as human industry because of its significant importance of manpower working in it. The human factor is the most significant one, since it is the people who have to use all other resources. The people in tourism industry are service-producers and service-providers as well. They are also managers for the service and planners who can create added-value for tourism product. However, when it comes to retailing the tourism products, we fail to assimilate the human development or the local communities who are not only beneficiaries but are also the epitome of India's culture and ethos. Many destinations or tourism products lack an insufficient promotional activity for rural / underdeveloped areas although endowed with sufficient tourism product. This arises out of putting marginal relevance of these products as a cultural tourism destination, the seasonal nature of tourism itself, or insufficient hospitality infrastructure. The question is that how local community can offer a viable solution for tourism development and remove its barriers in local communities? This can be done by increasing the community capacity in tourism. *Smith, Baugh-Littlejohns & Thompson* (2001) describe community capacity building as the "essence of development". The development of such areas for tourism requires the need to cater to the requirements of the local community. Social and economic benefits must firstly benefit the local population and then tourism. Tourism can also serve as an instrument for effective marketing for the underdeveloped / rural areas as well as generating employment for such areas. Discussing this issue, *Martha Frederick* (1992), in the book, "Tourism as a Rural Economic Development Tool: An Exploration of the Literature", gives an effective solution to the above mentioned problems. She considers that tourism can be an important source of jobs for economically underdeveloped / rural areas. Tourism offers business opportunities to local residents and can serve as a vehicle for marketing a place to potential residents and firms. In tourism sector, family firms or the local communities can be effectively utilized for retailing the Indian tourism beyond the borders of the country. *Rhodri Thomas, Gareth Shaw, and Stephen J. Page* (2011), mention how small firms are important from various points of view, all leading to the consolidation of the industry towards building from a developing state to robust economy. Further, *Jean-Luc Arregle, Michael A. Hitt, David G. Sirmon and Philippe Very* (2007) appropriates social capital theory and argue that family firms are unique as they work as a single entity, where at least two forms of social capital coexist: the family's and the firm's. Finally, they suggest the family firms' insights are generalizable to several other types of organizations more so often

with service orientation. Tourism, being the highly labour intensive activity, creates a high proportion of employment opportunities for low and semi skilled workers, particularly for poor, female (Women make up 70% of the labour force in tourism) and young workers (*Report of the Working Group on Tourism, 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, 2011*). In India, the technical planning and assistance can prove crucial to tourism development success for many small communities with limited resources in the short run and may solve the long run shortfall of human resource development for growth in Indian tourism.

### PERFORMANCE OF INDIA'S RURAL ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS

While analyzing the performance of India's rural economy, *Sarathi Acharya* and *Anup Mitra* of the South Asia Multidisciplinary Advisory Team( SAAT) highlights the following points about the rural economy in their working papers entitled, "*The potential of Rural Industries and Trade to provide decent work conditions: A data Reconnaissance in India*". **Table 2** contains information on the number of enterprises and total employment in rural India. In 1990, the total number of non- agricultural enterprises recorded in rural areas were 10,841,200 employing 29,302,000 workers (excluding Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal for which the data was yet not readily available). Rough estimates would place this at about 14 – 15 percent of the total rural labour force. Of these 10 – 11 million enterprises, a little more than 8 million were own account worker enterprises (OAE), meaning the family- manned units, and the rest 2.8 odd million were establishments, meaning these employed at least one hired worker. In other words, over 75% of the non-farm enterprises are one person enterprises. The average employment per enterprises works out to be 2.7 workers; while the figure for own account enterprises and establishments are 1.4 and 4.9, respectively .

**Table 2:** Growth Rates of Non- Agricultural OAE & EST in Rural India, Enterprises and Employment as per Economic Census (%)

State	Total No. of OAE	Total No. of EST	Total Em- ployment (In OAE)	Total Employ- ment (In EST)	Total No. of OAE	Total No. of EST	Rate of growth of Employment
	(b/w 1980-90)	(b/w 1980-90)	(b/w 1980-90)	(b/w 1980-90)	(b/w 1990-98)	(b/w 1990-98)	(b/w 1990-98)
Andhra Pradesh	2.91	2.78	2.56	4.11			
Assam					1.55	0.95	4.39
Bihar	0.74	2.06	0.37	2.46	-1.36	1.56	-2.67
Gujrat	0.41	0.72	0.3	2.7	-2.28	-2.09	-0.48
Haryana	2.18	4.28	1.57	4.69	0.78	2.12	1.33
Karnataka	0.79	2.13	0.15	3.8	-1.96	-2.35	0.68
Kerala	1.86	2.39	0.99	1.69	1.01	4.56	3.01
Madhya Pradesh	2.11	3.4	1.62	4.91	-0.61	0.43	-0.03
Maharashtra	1.79	2.69	1.32	2.57	0.58	-0.13	1.71
Orissa	2.83	3.59	2.57	4.04	3.31	1.59	1.62
Punjab	1.99	2.99	1.64	4.45	1.67	1.07	1.91
Rajasthan	0.82	4.81	0.24	3.66	0.65	-1.14	1.97
Tamil Nadu	0.4	3.55	-0.04	3.59	-0.88	2.32	0.98
Uttar Pradesh	1.24	1.39	0.45	2.1	0.42	-0.63	-0.34
West Bengal	6.09	4.07	5.9	3.48			
All India	2.27	3.12	1.87	3.64			
All India (13 States)					0.18	0.75	0.97

Note: OAE – Own Account Workers; EST – Establishments; b/w – between.

*Source:* Acharya, Sarathi and Anup Mitra; SAAT working papers

There were 12.6 million enterprises enumerated in 1990, about 9.5 in the own account enterprises category and about 3.2 million in the establishment category. If comparison is restricted to 13 major states (for which a corresponding panel data set can be constructed), a rise of about 2.6 percent in the number of enterprises is observed, which yields an annual exponential growth of 0.32 percent on the aggregate. There was an annual growth of 0.18 percent in enterprises of the

own account enterprise and 0.75 percent annual growth in enterprises has increased by 7.78 percent through these 8 years, which averages to 0.97 percent exponential growth per annum. Data pertaining to the period of the 1980s shows a stark contrast (**Table 2**) compared to the 1990s. There was higher growth, both in the number of enterprises and employment in that period, which also coincides with the fact that the period of the 1980s was one of the fiscal expansion in an otherwise controlled economy. As for the differential growth between own account enterprises and establishments, the pattern in the 1980s and 1990s is the same; meaning that own account enterprises grew at a pace slower than establishments even in the earlier period. Some find the opening up of the economy in 1990s to be the reason for the slow growth and shuttering down of many non-agricultural enterprises in rural areas.

**Table 3:** Principle Crops – Growth of Production & Yield

(Percent per annum)

	Production		Yield	
	(b/w 1980/81-1989/90)	(b/w 1980/91-2000/01)	(b/w 1980/81-1989/90)	(b/w 1980/91-2000/01)
Food Grains	2.85	1.66	2.74	1.34
Non Food Grains	3.77	1.86	2.31	0.54
All Crops	3.19	1.73	2.56	1.02

**Source:** Government. of India, *Economic Survey*, 2001-2002, 2002-2003

If we compare the agricultural productivity of 1980s with 1990s, we again find that as compared to the 1980s, during the 1990s, agricultural productivity as well as yield per hectare was declining as shown in the **Table 3**.

**Table 4:** Recent Growth of the Indian Economy

(Percent per annum)

	Eight Plan	Ninth Plan
Agriculture	4.69	2.06
Manufacturing	7.58	4.51
Services	7.54	7.78
Total	6.68	5.35

**Source:** Government of India, *Planning Commission*, Tenth Five Year Plan Document

Data published by the Tenth Five Year Plan document shows that the growth of agriculture & manufacturing sector is declining whereas service sector is showing a marginal improvement. During the Ninth Plan period, Indian Economy grew at the rate of 5.35% per annum, whereas during the period of Eighth Plan, growth was comparatively higher pegged at 6.68% per annum.

A state- wise picture, as given in **Table 2**, shows that own account enterprises(OAE) have not grown at the similar rates as the establishments across states. In fact, the ranks are quite different for the two categories. The annual exponential growth rates of OAEs during the period 1990-98 were positive in Assam, Haryana, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan & Uttar Pradesh and negative in Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The annual exponential growth rates of establishments were positive in Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Punjab & Tamil Nadu and negative elsewhere in this period. State-specific employment data shows a close relationship between growth of enterprises and growth in employment. This depicts a close relationship between growth of enterprise and growth in employment. A simple correlation coefficient between enterprise growth and employment growth is 0.67, suggesting that these enterprises can be fairly labour-consuming. The elasticity of employment with respect to the growth in the enterprises was 0.93 during the 1980s and 3.03 in the 1990s. The large difference between these two numbers is somewhat inexplicable.

If we analyze the percentage of agricultural exports to the total exports, Tenth Five Year Plan documents highlights that, its percentage share was 18.2% in 1998-99, which came down to 15.2% in 1999-2000; and further to 13.5% in 2000-01. Similarly, percentage of agricultural imports to total imports was 6.9% in 1998-99. The respective figure for 1999-2000 and 2000-01, was 5.8% and 3.7%.

From the above discussion and analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn. First the period of the 1980s showed a better performance of this sector in comparison with the period of 1990s in terms of growth of enterprise and employment and agricultural productivity. This implies that the overall performance of the economy in the latter period had minimal or no origins in this sector. An annual increase of 0.97 percent in employment is lower than the rise in the rural work force. During the period of 1990s, the rural non-farm sector was found to stagnate or shrink which was not the case in the 1980s when employment grew at a slightly higher pace than the labour force. Thus, the agriculture sector in rural Indian economy needs to be supplemented with an additional sector that should be employment-friendly and can be a catalyst for spurring rural economic growth. Rural Tourism definitely is the answer to the problem.

### NEED FOR NON URBAN EMPLOYABILITY IN INDIAN TOURISM GROWTH

Travel & Tourism sector in India contributes INR3,680.4bn (US\$79.6 billion) or 8.8% of the total GDP in India in the year 2011. The data reveals that the tourism sector supports 37,655,000 jobs (7.5% of total employment) in 2011 (*Travel and Tourism 2011 World, WTTC, 2011*). As per the World Travel & Tourism Council estimates, tourism contributes almost US\$6 trillion to the global economy, or 9% of global gross domestic product (GDP) in 2011 (*Travel and Tourism, 2011; World, WTTC, 2011*). The sector supports 260 million jobs worldwide (100 million of whom work directly in the industry). The WTTC has identified India as one of the foremost growth centers in the world. Tourism in India is the third largest net earner of foreign exchange next only to garments and gem and jewellery industry. India's share in the total global tourist arrivals and earnings remained quite insignificant at 0.52% of the world arrivals and the percentage of share of tourism receipts for 2006 was 0.90% considering the fact that Year 2006 has been rated as a highly successful year for tourism in India in terms of high foreign tourist arrivals and the positive growth rate (*Report of the Steering Committee on Tourism for the Eleventh Five-Year Plan, 2007-2012*).

The study further explores the quantitative forecasted human resource requirements of the tourism sector in the country and thereby studying the current employability scenario with respect to the gap between demand and supply with a view to interpret the gap fulfillment through the local communities of the non-urban tourism prospective destinations.

The WTTC data on Travel & Tourism estimates the direct employment by the sector at 24,974,000 jobs (5.0% of total employment) in 2011, which is forecasted at 30,439,000 jobs (5.2%) by 2021 as shown in the **Table 5**. In terms of the total contribution of Travel & Tourism to employment, including jobs indirectly supported by the industry, the figure is estimated at 37,655,000 jobs (7.5% of total employment) in 2011 that is forecasted to grow to 47,480,000 jobs (8.1%) by 2021 (*WTTC : India, 2011*). The current scenario puts the employability at 5% or one in every 20 direct employment created by the tourism sector and in terms of considering the total employability of the sector at 7.5% , the figure would be one in every 13.3 jobs.

**Table 5:** Tourism Contribution to GDP and Employment

	<b>Direct Contribution to gDP (US\$ bn)</b>	<b>Direct Contribution to Employment ('000)</b>
1990	10.987	13960.9
1991	11.066	15203.4
1992	11.548	17688.4
1993	11.591	17686.5
1994	12.975	17701.7
1995	14.619	17617.6
1996	15.726	17517.3
1997	17.628	18302
1998	18.659	18755.3
1999	20.337	19175.2
2000	22.879	23549.5
2001	18.742	19930.3
2002	22.401	21920.2

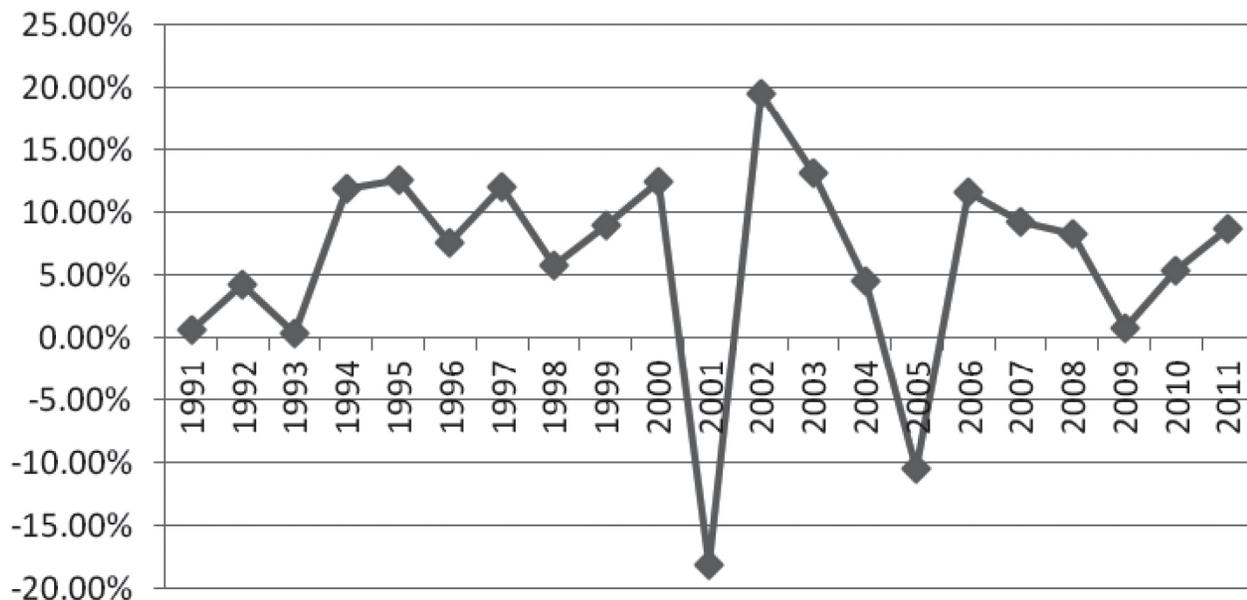
2003	25.344	23119.1
2004	26.486	23334
2005	23.716	22182
2006	26.487	24477.4
2007	28.942	23555.2
2008	31.33	25667.1
2009	31.597	24644.4
2010	33.295	24143
2011	36.192	24974.9

**Source:** Travel and Tourism:India(2011); World Travel and Tourism Council, available online at [http://www.wttc.org/site\\_media/uploads/downloads/india2011.pdf](http://www.wttc.org/site_media/uploads/downloads/india2011.pdf), Accessed on June 6, 2011

The trend for the Indian Travel & Tourism's total contribution to the GDP and employment over the two decade has been on the constant rise as shown in **graph 1 & 2**.

**Graph 1:** Travel & Tourism -Total Contribution to GDP (2011 US\$ bn)

### Percent Growth of Travel & Tourism Direct Contribution to GDP



**Source:** WTTC Economic Data

<http://www.wttc.org/research/economic-data-search-tool/>, Downloaded on February 6, 2012

**Graph 2:** Travel & Tourism- Total Contribution to Employment (‘000)

**Source:** WTTC Economic Data

<http://www.wttc.org/research/economic-data-search-tool/>, Downloaded on February 6, 2012

Based on the above data and trend, we can see that the Travel and Tourism's contribution to GDP although is growing at the rate of 6.18% a year, but the Travel and Tourism's contribution to employment is not keeping the pace as it is growing at an annual figure of meager 3.11%. It is evident that generating employability and improving the quality for more than a quarter of population living below the poverty line today has become imperative for India to accelerate its economic growth. N. Vanhove (1980) in his research paper at the First World Congress of Social Economics, considers both the primary, direct effects of tourism on employment, and the secondary effects, composed of both indirect and induced employment. Tourism is considered in the context of economic base analysis and the employment multiplier is derived from this analysis examined together with the income multiplier. The U. N. Report (1999) for the Human Resource Development Requirements of the Tourism Sector in India agrees that the most significant feature of the tourism industry in India is its capacity to generate large-scale employment opportunities. Further it recommends quantitative and qualitative build-up of human resources to meet the upcoming surge in demands.

India has a distinct advantage as a vast reservoir of skilled manpower coupled with huge regional disparity, greater poverty in non-urban areas and above all greater migration of population to metropolitans and bigger cities. The tourism sector, displaying the multiplier effect, can be the best instrument for growth of neglected, remote and backward areas as well as factor for equitable distribution across the country.

There are number of studies that highlight the important role tourism can play in development, describing the potential benefits in purely economic terms. In contrast, we forget to focus on the positive effects that tourism can bring to quality of life in rural and underdeveloped areas, including a greater "sense of place" for rural / underdeveloped areas residents, an upgrading of local cultural facilities, or an enhancement of regional conservation efforts. Frequent mention is to be made about different strategies employed in rural tourism, including heritage tourism, nature-based tourism/ecotourism, and agri-tourism.

Considering the overview as per the Market Pulse report published by the Ministry of Tourism (*A Market Pulse Report*, 2004); Indian tourism sector is urgently required to drastically close the gap between existing supply and expected radical increase in annual demand of human resources in a very near future. There is direct relationship of tourism growth with increased employability by the sector. The local communities hold the key to the future growth of Indian tourism.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (*Report of the Working Group on Tourism, 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, 2011*) also looks forth to synergize tourism for poverty reduction as well as to develop high skills for the sector to grow considerably. It is worthwhile to look and emulate the successful stories of tourism growth through investments and vigorous participation of local communities in successful tourism- rich economies like Malaysia, Thailand, Jamaica, etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

Rural India needs an all-round development for not only reducing rampant poverty, boost sagging global agricultural competitiveness, harboring increased rural economic activities; but also towards building the strong economic growth for the country by creating and supplementing Indian agriculture with the tourism growth. Servicing the tourism sector with skilled manpower becomes imperative and foremost challenge for the 12th Plan period (*Report of the Working Group on Tourism, 12<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan (2012-2017)*) along side the development of more decentralized and non-urban tourism destinations.

The various Plans however not only missed on generating an apex team of frontline tourism professionals who could induce directions and guidance in this regards; but also evinced no interest in creating a structured and systematic human resource management plan-outlay for Tourism through involving local communities in a rural setting. Above all, the policy planners should look forward to spur innovations for developing local communities' preparedness for the tourism sector by focusing on certain suggestive core strategies for Tourism in India as an instrument for growth of underdeveloped and rural areas. This should include following items, interalia:

1. *Having a defined rural / pro-poor tourism development policy:* To chalk-out the rural / underdeveloped areas equitably all across the country, defining of rural tourism circuits, inducing incentives and investments
2. *Identifying current and future skills and training needs:* By developing an industry training strategy, designing and developing training programs, establishing occupational and program standards, promoting industry training and recruit trainees, promoting careers in tourism, marketing and promotion of programs to employers, promoting industry participation and engagement in training opportunities.
3. *Establishing training and development trust funds:* Community-based and community-driven, these trusts to be designed to put decisions about local tourism development in the hands of the communities themselves on public private partnership with the government regulators.
4. *Focusing on the youth:* By creating opportunities for youth locally by adopting a multi-disciplinary process with regard to career development opportunities, and removing cultural and social barriers that can prevent young people from working.
5. *Development for local communities to tourism growth:* Establish occupational skills capacity building activities for tour operators, guides, accommodations management, cuisine preparation and transportation
6. Dovetail training programs and methodologies to create sustainable tourism products and services
7. Identify in consultation with NGOs, UN Organizations, etc. for at least one pilot project in each identified rural / underdeveloped areas for all states. (*Mehdi,2012*)

The rural India holds the key to robust economic development, poverty reduction, employment generation and reduction of regional imbalances and disparities. The future does belongs to the rise of new economic powers , India being tom-tomed as the favourite. What is required is to operationalize a systematic overall development plan with twin goal of employment and growth. Fusion of tourism sector with the rural economy can bring a win-win situation for the policy makers as well as the rural poor. .

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