

Pro-Poor Tourism in India: Reality or Hyperbole!

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ABSTRACT

Tourism industry has been applauded for being the sunrise industry for its continuous growth and potential to alleviate poverty. India is a country with diverse untapped tourism resources and also, a country that has suffered from persistent poverty. Henceforth, the tourism sector can act as a panacea to the problem of poverty especially in a developing country like India. In the last two decades, a good number of tourism initiatives with a 'Pro-poor approach' are launched in India but there is hardly any study that has put light on the effectiveness of such initiatives or policies on the poor or how such tourism approach or strategy can be more effective in the Indian context. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to evaluate and envisage the various initiatives promoting Pro-poor Tourism in India since last two decades and to study the critical aspects of the Pro-poor tourism in India as a contribution to the existing literature. Designed with an exploratory approach this paper sheds light on various initiatives relating to the pro-poor tourism in India in last two decades. Data have been collected from reputed journals, Govt. Documents and Reports, Edited Books of both National and International Publishers. The study concludes that despite the massive potential of pro-poor tourism initiatives, the power of tourism to alleviate poverty in India have not been completely harnessed so far.

Keywords

Pro-poor Tourism, Indian Tourism, Poverty Alleviation, Policies, Governanc

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Introduction

After the World War II, achieving two goals - 'Development' and 'Qualitative and Quantitative Growth in Economy' became crucial especially in case of the underdeveloped or 'Third World' countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, where a small section of people belonging to the elite class were receiving the maximum benefits of the 'blessings of civilization'. The debate on which framework or policy would be the best one to achieve these goals initiated there on. In the 1970s, it was commonly believed that poverty related issues could be overcome by fulfilling the basic demands of the unprivileged people of the society, but later it was realized that the 'economic growth' alone cannot be the solution [1]. Rather along with the economic growth; if cultural independence, reliance on individual's power, and resources can be increased, the poverty could be alleviated to a great extent [2-3]. The 'International Tourism' got its recognition in the 1950s, and by 1970, tourism grew rapidly. Initially, tourism was taken as an activity for leisure, pleasure, entertainment. But as the time progressed, the academicians as well as the tourism practitioners started realizing that tourism

has also the ability to alleviate poverty especially in the developing countries as it involves the economically backward people through different activities and thus, helping them in receiving a share from the tourism revenue. In the 1970s, the World Bank Group started financing in the infrastructural projects worldwide as well as started taking positive initiatives in providing credits to the foreign investors for various tourism projects worldwide in view of tourism's social and environmental impacts [4]. Moreover, The World Bank Group also started advising on Structural Adjustment Programs to promote tourism in the developing nations [5]. When de Kadt's [6] path-breaking collection of papers was published, the contributors were clearly divided into two groups on the topic - how far tourism can benefit the poor? A good number of scholars expressed their doubts whether tourism can genuinely act as a development tool or not [7]. In this very context, the Pro-Poor Tourism movement started in the 1990s with an aim to expand the opportunities for the poor to obtain 'Net Benefits' from tourism [8-9].

Now, India is a country that has suffered from persistent poverty, but at the same time, this country boasts of diverse untapped tourism

resources. Henceforth, the tourism sector in India can act as a panacea to the problem of poverty. In last two decades, we have witnessed a good number of tourism initiatives and policies with 'Pro-poor approach' to be launched or implemented in this country but there is hardly any study that has put light on the topic - At what extent these initiatives have become successful so far? Moreover, the answer of "How tourism with Pro-poor approach could be more effective in Indian context?"- is also not very clear in the literature. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to evaluate and envisage various initiatives promoting 'Pro-poor Tourism' in India in last two decades while discussing its critical aspects as well.

Objective

This paper revolves around few key objectives. The First objective is to conceptualize the idea of PPT (Pro-Poor Tourism) and its role in poverty alleviation. For the second objective, the paper provides a brief argument on the topic - why tourism having a Pro-poor approach is important for the developing countries such as India. The third objective is to evaluate and envisage various initiatives and policies taken to promoting 'Pro-poor Tourism' in India in last two decades, as well as put light on the factors making these initiatives less-effective in term of return. The fourth and final objective is to suggest ways to make PPT more effective in India, so that the poor and marginalized people could receive maximum benefits from it.

Methodology

This study can be categorized as a conceptual research. Designed with an exploratory approach this paper sheds light on the various literatures (both scientific and grey) related to the initiatives relating to pro-poor tourism initiatives in India in last few decades. The sources for collection of relevant research articles are: Web of Science Indexed Journals, Scopus Indexed Journals, UGC CARE Listed Journals, Peer- Reviewed Journals, Govt. Documents and Reports, Edited Books of both National and International Publishers.

Pro-Poor tourism - an effective tool for poverty alleviation

Pro-Poor Tourism (PPT) is neither any type of tourism product, nor it is a niche tourism strategy. **Duim and Caalders [10] and Hall [11]** describe it as an approach towards the tourism development and management. The key objective of PPT is to enable the poor and marginalized people of the society in receiving the maximum possible benefits from the tourism sector [12]. It not only helps the poor in receiving livelihood benefits from tourism, but also increases the participation of the poor in the tourism development and in the decision-making process [13] that empowers the host community members. PPT mainly focuses on two aspects: (1) How tourism can bring about positive changes in the livelihoods of the poor, and (2) How the positive impacts of the tourism can be maximized by the help of effective interventions [15–22]. **Dwyer and Wickens [14]** think this 'New Tourism' approach is more sensitive to the host culture compared to the other tourism approaches.

PPT connects the poor with the tourism sector and thus, the economically backward people such as local suppliers, craft-makers etc. can effectively participate in 'tourism planning' and 'new product development' [10]. This very approach was first introduced when the nature-based tourism led development at many destinations failed partially, and as a result, the human development of the economically backward section became a challenge to the developing nations [23]. In the 1990s, the individual's refocused attention towards the main stream tourism studies gained attention for the need to consider tourism as a tool for alleviating poverty and tourism has been shifted as a primary concern of sustainable use of natural resources and a tool to enhance conservation. Initially, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) concept was heavily biased towards the environmental considerations. The introduction of livelihood approach invites a wider scope for analyzing how tourism development can assist the poor as well as the marginalized section of people [24–27]. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002; showcased the pro-poor debates around tourism for the very first time and later on, Washington Declaration on Tourism as a Sustainable Development Strategy (2004) recognized the tourism's contribution to

the 'equitable redistribution of income' and the 'liberalization with a human face' [28].

In this 'New Tourism' approach, the emphasis is given to identify the ways through which tourism can reduce poverty. Hence, the main focus is not on how tourism can be developed at destinations; rather, it is on how tourism system can be used so that poverty can be eradicated at local level. According to **Roe and Urquhart [21]**, the PPT approach if properly implemented can secure livelihood of the local community as it generates local employment and increases the scope for small earnings for the residents as a survival strategy. The number of direct employment in the tourism sector may be low or may be concentrated among more skilled, but the collective income of the community members along with the other livelihood benefits make this approach significant to the local, as it helps in individual poverty reduction PPT helps in well-being of the community people struggling with poverty. **Roy,**

Hirschowitz, Orkin and Alberts [29] observe poverty as "the denial of opportunities and choices most basic to human development to lead a long, healthy, creative life and to enjoy a decent standard of living, freedom, dignity, self-esteem and respect from others." In that context, PPT can act as an effective tool to alleviate poverty [30].

Roy and Saha [23] also finds that such approach not only emphasizes on the work participation of the poorer section of the society, but also offers the poor the much needed employment as well as involves them in different self-help groups, and thus establishes a synthesis between the developments of tourism by upgrading the degree of livelihood status of the poor. However, many debates also have been revolved around the 'Net Benefits', and 'Opportunities' - those the poor receive from the tourism development [19, 24, 31-33].

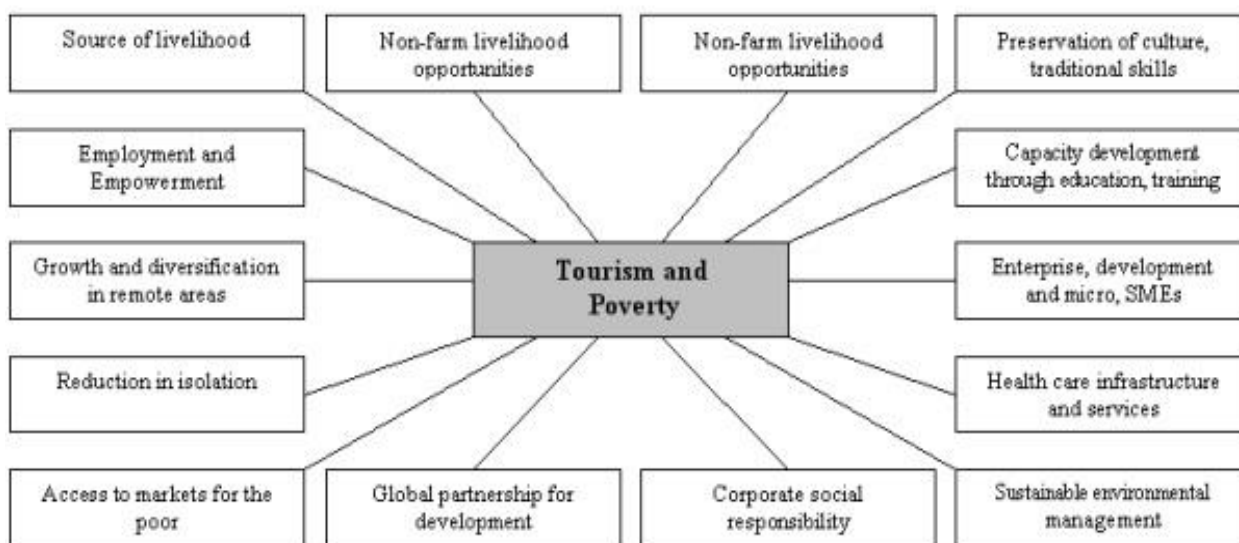


Fig1: The linkage between tourism and poverty alleviation (Source: UNESCAP, n.d)

Importance of PPT in the developing countries like India

PPT plays an important role in the developing countries as it helps in strengthening the local economy [31]. It not only increases the job scope at local level but also enable the poor to make decision by their own. Moreover, such approach enhances the linkage between the "poor" and the "tourism sector", which helps the poor to participate in the tourism development in a more effective way [34]. These "poor" may be the local suppliers, or the local tour operators, or the craft-makers, or may be the consumers of tourism

infrastructures and resources [35]. According to **Mehrotra [36]**, the growth rate of service sector (10.7%) is better than other sectors like - Manufacturing (9.4%) and Agriculture (2%) and as tourism is a labour-oriented and service-based sector, it requires man power that subsequently creates job opportunities for the semi-skilled and the low-skilled workers at different tourism destinations. It is also found that tourism has the ability to stimulate the tourist-demands for goods and services; those are produced and offered mainly by the poor. Moreover, tourism can also involve a good number of female in its workforce. Thus, tourism having a pro-poor approach can

bring benefits to the economically backward people in the developing countries like India if properly implemented. In this context, **Brako and Joseph [37]** conducted a study in the temple city Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh with over two hundred community samples, and find that there is a strong positive connection between the 'Pro-Poor Tourism' and the 'Local Area Development'. Hence, **Roy, Roy and Saha [23]** considers the PPT approach a crucial one in the context of developing countries like India, as according to them, such approach has the ability to make rural India more prosperous by backing its economy.

PPT initiatives in India– a reportage

Tourism in India is emerging as an agent for sustainable development, poverty alleviation, income and employment generation [38-39]. During the last two decades, the concept of Pro Poor Tourism (PPT) has occupied an important place in the Indian tourism. The prime objective is nothing but to involve the weaker section of the society in tourism activities to improve their socio-economic condition and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Keeping this into focus, the Govt. of India has taken a good number of initiatives to reach the target by encouraging and involving the poor in the tourism sector with a view to distribute the benefits of tourism among them.

In 2002, in the "National Tourism Policy", rural tourism was recognized as a focus area for employment generation and sustainable livelihood in rural India as it encourages various other economic activities around tourism businesses, those strengthen the foothold of the rural economy [40]. It was planned that the picturesque Indian villages representing diverse indigenous cultures would be developed as tourism destinations, and the targeted beneficiaries would be the rural people looking for jobs to sustain their livelihood. It was also believed that the introduction of rural tourism in India would help in cultural revitalization that would make the rural people proud, and with the help of the *Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI)*, the villagers would be able to leverage their skills towards income generation and thus, such initiative would be beneficial to rural communities. In the same year, 2002, the Indian Government also launched the "Incredible India" campaign, with an aim to positioning India

as an attractive tourist destination in the world tourism map by showcasing and branding its rich history, culture, spirituality and traditions, basically those define the concept of 'Bharat' in the international markets [41].

In 2003, The MoT (Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India) identified 153 rural sites across the country under the Rural Destination Development Pilot Project. The MoT and The UNDP (United Nations' Development Programme) jointly initiated the Endogenous Tourism Project – Rural Tourism (ETP-RTS) scheme, in which 36 Indian villages were selected. In this scheme, The UNDP funded for the capacity building component, whereas the Govt. of India (GoI) invested for the improvement of rural infrastructure; and the guiding principles of this scheme were similar to the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals [42]. Moreover, under another scheme named PIDDC (Product / Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits), the Central Government assured 100 % Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to the tune of Rs. 50 Lacs for the development of tourism infrastructure and Rs. 20 Lacs for the capacity building program in the select rural tourism destinations.

The Kerala State Government decided to implement the Responsible Tourism to make the state's tourism policy more Pro-poor in 2006. This initiative kicked off in the year 2007, and the Govt. of India sees the program as a successful system that could be replicated at the national level [43]. **Michot [44]** in his working paper has provided descriptive accounts of the RT initiatives in Kerala that emerged as a successful case study for being pro-poor.

The Ministry of Tourism turned the spot light on Pro Poor Tourism in its 'Annual Report 2010-2011'. India's '12th Five year plan 2012-17' acknowledged the Pro-poor role of tourism and urged the Govt. institutions to ensure greater involvement of the poor people in the tourism sector [45]. The Govt. of India also launched 'Swadesh Darshan', in which the Central Govt. has developed theme-based tourism circuit throughout the country, identified by the Ministry of Tourism (MoT).

The international organizations such as World Bank Group, Asian Development Bank (ADB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), etc. which are offering financial support to the tourism development in many of the South Asian countries

are also consciously targeting the poor as an immediate approach to reduce poverty in India [46]. In recent past, the World Bank along with the Ministry of Tourism (GoI) had invested crores of rupees for the development of the tourism infrastructure in major tourist centres in India such as Sarnath, Kushinagar, Shravasti on Buddhist Circuit and development work in Agra and Mathura. Moreover, the World Bank has also supported the Indian Govt. as well as many State Tourism Departments including Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in the Pro-Poor Tourism Development Program by a good number of ways. (1) Developing the Buddhist Circuit, (2) Fostering the tourism-led growth, (3) Expanding the economic opportunities, (4) Creating jobs for the local residents, and (5) Offering better facilities to pilgrims - are a few of them.

Also, planned Geotourism initiatives are known not just for their power to alleviate the poverty in the nearby communities but also for restoring the geomorphosites in West Bengal, India [47]. **Baporikar [48]** critically analyses various policies of Indian Government for tourism development and have highlighted various kinds of tourism initiatives that have achieved the goal of being pro-poor in reality. Similarly, the power of tourism in uplifting the economic and social condition of the poorest of the poor tribes and communities living near Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Odisha has been showcased in the studies of **Biswas [49]**; **Das and Chatterjee [50]**.

Critical aspects of Pro-Poor tourism in India

Albeit all its potential to eradicate poverty, 'tourism projects' in India have frequently come under the scanner for being poorly planned and improperly applied. Take for example the rural tourism project initiated by the Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India for the promotion of rural places and upliftment of the rural poor. An evaluation report of those initiatives drafted by the ministry in collaboration with ACNielsen ORG-MARG Pvt. Ltd showed that out of the 107 projects only 34% projects were successful while rest 66% of the rural projects were either unsuccessful or failure [43]. In this context, it has been documented that without proper policy implementation, pro-poor tourism initiatives to boost the economic condition of the mountain communities (that are typically poorer than their low land counterparts) can in turn become a great

threat to the fragile ecosystem of the mountain areas with low resiliency [51]. It has also been observed that the idea of being pro-poor mostly remains in the policy document and hardly gets translated in to a reality when it comes to tourism initiatives. Similar case has been experienced in the study conducted by **Ahmad, Rawat and Rai [52]** which exhibits the growing number of negative impacts generated by huge tourist influx and ad hoc planning created for tourist recreation in Indian Himalaya regions.

Moreover, the western media has been constantly selling the idea of India as a romanticized state with eternal, poverty-ridden people, exotic females, and less manly men [53]. Many research studies conducted by the scholars, and a good number of NGOs also reveal that tourism in India however, has not reached out to the common masses especially to the poor and marginalized people at most of the tourist destinations, as according to **Merhotra [54]**, the net benefits accrue only to the limited segment of the society in those places, and more particularly, to the big business agents.

The basic idea and nomenclature of pro-poor tourism in reality fuel this enduring stereotype. Hence, states like Kerala are promoting concepts like wellness and spa tourism to differentiate themselves from this image of being poor and chaotic [55]. Such instances are provided by **Dyson [56]** and **Nisbett [57]** who critique the restricted and limited ability of slum tours areas in altering the negative perception among tourists about slums. However, **Gupta [58]** through a qualitative enquiry puts forward the argument that reality tourism (in which tourists visit the slum areas to experience the reality) does actually change the tourist perspective of poverty. This dichotomy in conclusions is interesting given the fact that all of these studies had taken Dharavi slums of Mumbai as their case study. Another undesired impact of unplanned tourism has been registered in Indian Himalayan region where unethical selling of fake indigenous products has in fact resulted in making the poor producer of original products socio-economically marginalized [59].

Hand in hand, it has been found that the main motive of community members behind carrying out tourism activities is mostly to earn livelihood and not environment protection [60]. It also seems that the aspect of gender participation and

equality is ignored in PPT deliverable. In case of the strategies put forward by UNWTO Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty (ST-EP) programme and Pro-poor Partnership, the poor are seemed to be a similar group and the ‘economic poverty’ perspective is suggested though not directly expressed. The success of PPT strategies to be truly pro-poor depends on the upliftment of the female community, who often treated as insignificant in the society especially in the third world countries like India.

Hui [61] considers the ‘psychological connotation of the poverty’ as a vital aspect, and according to him, it results from lack of knowledge and power. Therefore, the Endogenous Tourism Projects (ETPs) should include all groups irrespective of gender within a community. As per the observation made by **EQUATIONS [62]**, the employment and exploitation of children is another matter of prime concern in the tourism industry in developing countries like India, where, the children are exploited in a huge number as they are paid low wages capitalizing their dire poverty and thus, this section are deprived of access to educational health. Therefore, the Pro-poor initiatives should keep in mind this issue so as to encompass all sections of poor.

How to make PPT more effective in India – suggestive measures

PPT can be more effective by applying the ‘Three Tired PPT Approach’ which talks about (1) increasing the economic benefits of tourism at local level, (2) enhancing the non-financial livelihood impacts, and (3) increasing community participation in the tourism sector[63]. Maximization of economic benefits of tourism at local level can be possible by generating employment for the local community members, enhancing community skill by providing them proper training facilities, involving the local entrepreneurs such as food suppliers, craft producers, transport operators, guides, etc. in the tourism businesses, and developing the collective income sources for the local community members in the form of revenue shares, equity dividends, or donations given by the tourists. Non-financial livelihood impacts in the community life can be enhanced by organizing capacity building training programmes for the local community members especially for the women and the youth,

minimizing the negative socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism at destinations, ensuring the right of the community members to access the tourism infrastructure and services made for the tourists. Whereas the third and final approach can be done effectively by formulating supportive tourism policies, involving the poor people more and more in the decision making process at tourism destinations, linking the poor with the private sectors, and increasing community awareness and flow of communication at different levels[63]. Moreover, the tourism development should change its focus in the direction of community welfare, so that the tourism benefits can be realized for the local communities.

The coordination between all the tourism stakeholders is also important to make tourism more pro-poor. The private sectors may collaborate with the Government to maximize the economic benefits for the poor by developing and promoting ‘new tourism products’ by adopting effective marketing strategies [21]. The Government’s role also cannot be side-lined, as they formulate policies, strategies and schemes for the poor. The host community members at any tourism destination also play an important part, as they are the one who participate in various tourism activities, and thus, promote the PPT; whereas, the Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) may support PPT through their agendas and schemes targeting to make tourism more sustainable.

The tourism stakeholders may it be the local tour operators, or the hoteliers, or the Tourists- also have their individual responsibility to make any kind of tourism more Pro poor [9]. In this regard, the Hoteliers should purchase local products from the local suppliers, hire local people especially the unemployed youth, encourage the local performers to display their cultural assets in front of the guests to support the local businesses, and encourage the poor community members at any tourism destination to actively participate in the tourism business. The Tour Operators should hire local guides and encourage the tourists to consume local services as much as possible, and thus can boost up the morale of the local tourism businesses, and directly benefit the economy at local level by raising the household income of the local residents. The tourists can also make charitable contributions to the local community

development fund so that the local cultural heritages can be properly maintained and the well-being of the poor at any tourism destination can be ushered by those contributions. As individual success cannot match the overall achievement there are certain doubts whether tourism stakeholders can make any 'Big difference' by putting individual efforts lonely. Therefore, if all the tourism stakeholders will work together and co-operate each other the PPT approach can be more effective.

A study was conducted in the Cooch Bihar district of the Indian state, West Bengal, where the authors argue for introducing Pro-poor Tourism in that region to improve the economic condition of the poor and also to rejuvenate the local economy[23]. The study suggests that to make tourism more pro-poor, the Governmental enterprises have to carry out their responsibilities sincerely. Moreover, the poorer section of the society should be backed by financial support, which can be done by (1) introducing self-help programs for the local community members, (2) creating a market for selling of local products and handicrafts, (3) generating income for the local women by organizing indigenous cultural programs, (4) providing financial support and other necessary assistance to the local community members to set up their own businesses in hotel, and hospitality sectors, (5) encouraging and educating the local and unemployed youth to be involved in the tour operations, (6) conducting different skill development and capacity building programs at a regular interval, and (7) sincerely applying the work force at local level for earning. The role of the Private enterprises, along with the NGOs is also important as these bodies should support the marginalized section of the society by introducing similar kind of approaches that would provide multi-tier benefits favouring both the investors as well as the poor and subsequently, boost the economy of the rural India.

The poor community members involved in tourism sector lack proper skills, resources, markets to manage and promote their businesses in an effective way. At the same time, lack of proper training facilities also makes situation difficult for these people to maintain the standard or the quality of their services. Therefore, the private sectors must be involved in the tourism sector as they can train these community people to be more efficient and professional [37]. Moreover,

they have skills, experience, and established clientele. As well as they know the industry as their own palm, and have sufficient money to invest for the infrastructure development at tourism destinations that would ultimately benefit the poor.

In another study conducted by Mehrotra [54] in the temple city Varanasi, in Uttar Pradesh, suggests that PPT strategy requires a wide range of actions from micro to macro level to make tourism more beneficial for the poor. Therefore, new product development, promotion of locally-made products, formulation of Pro-poor policies, investment in the tourism sector etc. can be done. Moreover, to ensure commercial viability; understanding the market demand, improving the quality of the product, finding proper marketing channel, enhancing the business skills, and including the private sectors in the tourism businesses are also required. The richer section of the society also have to make positive effort to reach out the tourism benefits directly to the poor, working in the tourism sector day and night.

Another study conducted to investigate the contributions of PPT in poverty alleviation in the developing countries with emphasis on South Africa, Middle East and South East Asia points out that PPT in these countries requires a lot of planning and strategies to produce better results[23]. This particular study suggests that (1) Ensuring Community Participation in the planning and development of tourism at destinations, (2) Recruiting local community members especially the unemployed youth in the tourism businesses after providing them proper training and infrastructure, (3) Understanding how tourism functions in destinations, how tourism income can be distributed equally and who benefits from this, (4) Paying attention to the viability of projects involving the poor, (5) Ensuring access to the markets, (6) Maximizing the benefits by making link with the established enterprises, and finally (7) Carefully monitoring the impacts of tourism on poverty alleviation are a few of the key strategies to make PPT initiatives more effective in Indian scenario.

Finally, to make PPT approach more effective in developing countries like India; a step by step model have been proposed below (See Fig:2). It is recommended to all those stakeholders who are directly and/or indirectly involved with tourism planning & promotion, should dreadfully try to

alleviate poverty through pro-poor tourism approach, so that local can be more benefited from integrated tourism development. The strategies intend to unravel opportunities for livelihood benefits for the poor. Nonetheless, poverty can be alleviated through overall sectoral growth, including economic development. In eliminating poverty and developing PPT in a certain destination a robust planning is required; micro level planning, i.e. while endorsing PPT, particular responsible site need to espouse CSR (Corporate social responsibility) policy for sustainable development, as mentioned in the model to generate net benefits from the tourism sectors, implementation of pro-poor tourism policy and coordination between stakeholders are utmost important steps. Whilst, local community participation and involvement in the tourism business is an indispensable strategy to expand direct benefits which could create more jobs, in addition, through the development of home-grown products local community could be more empowered. Encouraging women in the local tourism business through training and skill development could help to boost women empowerment. For peaceful and sustainable development stakeholders should be cognizant of gender discrimination which needs to be mitigated rather an elevation of gender equality will be fortified. Macro level planning should take into contemplation stakeholders need to adopt policies to reduce negative environmental impacts and encourage environments sustainability. Coordination between private & Govt. sector and assistance from financial institution are again requisite steps for successful implementation of PPT approach.

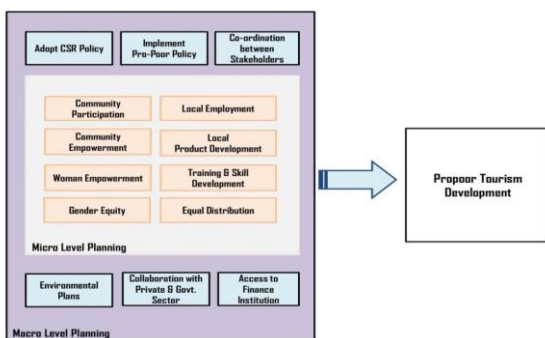


Fig 2: Proposed Framework of the Pro-Poor Tourism Development in Indian Context

Conclusion

India is a country with contradictions. While in one hand it is filled with all the resources of nature, on the other hand it suffers from persistent poverty. It is argued that the natural endowments India has been blessed with can be converted in to tourism resource which in turn can act as an agent for poverty alleviation and economic growth. Keeping this in mind, many new initiatives have been undertaken to promote Indian tourism destinations and to eliminate poverty at the community level. However, any evaluation of these initiatives has been hardly documented in any paper. This paper tries to fill this gap by deliberating upon the positive and negative impacts of the tourism initiatives carried out to alleviate poverty. In the initial sections the relationship between poverty and tourism has been discussed in detail. Second part of the study talks about the various Indian tourism initiatives which were launched with an aim to alleviate poverty. At the end, the critical aspects and implications of Indian pro-poor tourism initiatives have been discussed briefly. It is concluded that despite the massive potential of pro-poor tourism initiatives, the power of tourism to alleviate poverty in India have not been completely harnessed. This comes as an opportunity to fill the gap and make tourism work for the poor.

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