

# The Role of Tourism in Empowering Women in Rural India

**Dr.Preeti Raina, Assistant professor**

**Tourism Management and Administration**

**Govt. College for Women Faridabad**

## Abstract

Tourism has the potential to empower women in rural India by providing them with economic opportunities, access to education and training, and a platform to showcase their talents and skills. This research paper explores the role of tourism in empowering women in rural India through a comprehensive analysis of the various ways in which tourism can benefit women in these communities. The paper also discusses the challenges and barriers that women face in accessing and benefiting from tourism opportunities, and provides recommendations for how these challenges can be addressed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in rural India. Tourism can also provide women in rural India with access to education and training, which can help them to improve their skills and knowledge and increase their earning potential. Many tourism projects in rural India include training programs for women in areas such as hospitality, cooking, handicrafts, and guiding, which can help them to secure employment in the tourism industry or start their own businesses. Education and training can also help women to improve their self-confidence and decision-making skills, and enable them to take on leadership roles in their communities.

**Keywords: Tourism: Empowering Women: Rural India: Promote Gender Equality**

## Introduction



Tourism has long been recognized as a powerful tool for economic development and poverty alleviation in developing countries, including India. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the potential of tourism to empower women in rural communities by providing them with

access to income-generating opportunities, education and training, and a platform to showcase their talents and skills. Women in rural India face numerous challenges and barriers to economic empowerment, including limited access to education and training, lack of opportunities for

meaningful employment, and social and cultural norms that restrict their freedom and mobility. Tourism can help to overcome these barriers by providing women with a source of income, access to education and training, and a platform to showcase their talents and skills.

Women in rural India are often the primary caregivers and breadwinners for their families, and tourism can provide them with opportunities to earn a sustainable income and improve their economic well-being. Many women in rural India are skilled artisans, weavers, and craftswomen, and tourism can provide them with a platform to showcase their products and sell them to a wider audience. In addition, tourism can create new jobs and business opportunities for women in rural communities, such as homestays, handicrafts, and cultural performances.

Tourism can also provide women in rural India with access to education and training, which can help them to improve their skills and knowledge and increase their earning potential. Many tourism projects in rural India include training programs for women in areas such as hospitality, cooking, handicrafts, and guiding, which can help them to secure employment in the tourism industry or start their own businesses. Education and training can also help women to improve their self-confidence and decision-making skills, and enable them to take on leadership roles in their communities.

Despite the potential benefits of tourism for women in rural India, there are also significant challenges and barriers that women face in accessing and benefiting from tourism opportunities. These challenges include limited access to education and training, lack of financial resources and support, discriminatory social and cultural norms, and gender-based violence and harassment. Women in rural India are often marginalized and excluded from decision-making processes and economic opportunities, which can limit their ability to benefit from tourism projects and initiatives. In addition, women in rural India face significant barriers to mobility and freedom, which can restrict their ability to participate in tourism activities and benefit from tourism opportunities. To promote gender equality and women's empowerment in rural India, it is important to address these challenges and barriers and create an enabling environment for women to participate in and benefit from tourism projects and initiatives. This can be achieved through a comprehensive approach that includes policy and legal reforms, targeted initiatives and programs, and community engagement and capacity building. Governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector can play a key role in promoting women's empowerment in rural India through tourism by investing in education and training programs, providing financial support and resources, promoting gender-sensitive policies and practices, and raising awareness about women's rights and empowerment.

Tourism is a rapidly growing sector in India, contributing significantly to the country's economy and providing employment opportunities for millions of people. With the government's focus on promoting tourism through various initiatives such as 'Incredible India' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava', the sector has witnessed immense growth over the years. However, one aspect that has been gaining attention in recent times is the role of women entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.

Women entrepreneurship has been on the rise in India, with more and more women venturing into various sectors to establish their businesses. The tourism sector, in particular, has seen a significant increase in the number of women entrepreneurs starting their own ventures, ranging from homestays and travel agencies to tour guides and souvenir shops. These women are not only contributing to the growth of the tourism industry but are also empowering themselves by taking charge of their careers and financial independence.

This paper aims to explore the role of women entrepreneurship in the Indian tourism sector, analyzing the challenges and opportunities that women entrepreneurs face, and highlighting the initiatives and support systems available to empower them in their journey. The paper will also examine the impact of women entrepreneurship on the tourism industry, and how it can contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of the sector.

### **Background**

Women entrepreneurship in India has been steadily growing over the years, with more women breaking traditional barriers and venturing into various sectors to establish their businesses. According to a report by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), the number of women entrepreneurs in India has increased by 63% in the last decade, showcasing the growing trend of women taking charge of their careers and contributing to the country's economy.

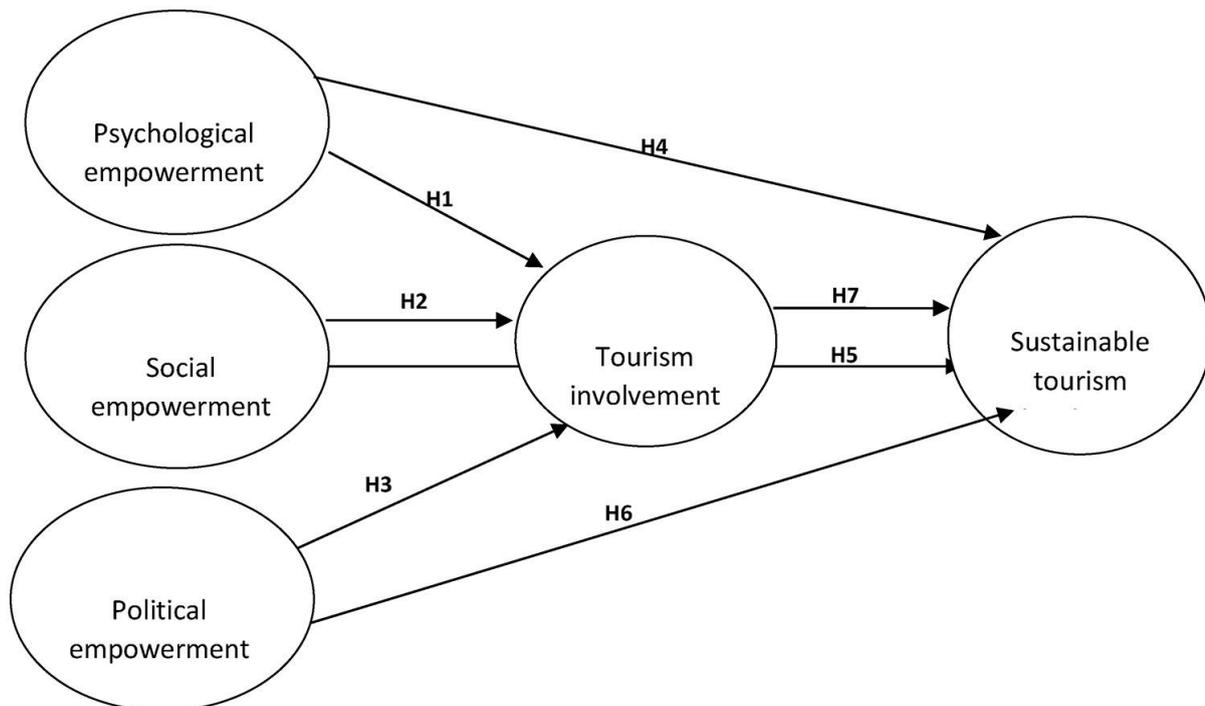
The tourism sector in India has been one of the key drivers of economic growth, contributing significantly to the country's GDP and providing employment opportunities to millions of people. With the government's focus on promoting tourism through various initiatives such as 'Incredible India' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava', the sector has witnessed immense growth and has become a major contributor to the country's economy.

One of the key reasons for the growth of women entrepreneurship in the tourism sector is the changing social and cultural dynamics in India. With more women becoming educated and financially independent, they are now looking beyond traditional roles and exploring opportunities to start their businesses. The tourism sector, with its diverse opportunities and flexibility, provides an ideal platform for women to showcase their skills and creativity and establish successful

ventures.

However, despite the growing trend of women entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, women still face several challenges that hinder their growth and sustainability. These challenges include lack of access to finance, limited networking opportunities, gender bias, and societal norms that discourage women from taking risks and venturing into entrepreneurship. In addition, women often struggle to balance their personal and professional lives, especially in a sector like tourism that requires long hours and frequent travel.

To address these challenges and empower women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, various initiatives and support systems have been introduced by the government and non-governmental organizations. These initiatives include providing financial assistance through schemes like the Stand-Up India and Mudra Yojana, offering mentorship and training programs, and creating networking platforms for women to connect with other entrepreneurs and industry experts.



The increasing participation of women entrepreneurs in the tourism sector not only benefits the individual entrepreneurs but also contributes to the overall growth and sustainability of the sector. Women bring a unique perspective and creativity to the industry, creating niche products and services that cater to the changing preferences of tourists. Women entrepreneurs also play a vital role in promoting sustainable and responsible tourism practices, contributing to the conservation of natural resources and preservation of cultural heritage.

Women entrepreneurship in the Indian tourism sector is on the rise, with more women breaking traditional barriers and venturing into the industry to establish their businesses. Despite facing

challenges, women entrepreneurs are making significant contributions to the growth and sustainability of the tourism sector, and empowering themselves in the process. With the right support and initiatives, women entrepreneurs have the potential to further drive the growth of the tourism industry and create a more inclusive and diverse sector.

### **Review of Literature**

Tourism has been recognized as one of the fastest-growing industries globally, with the potential to create significant economic opportunities for developing nations. In recent years, the role of tourism in empowering women in rural India has gained increasing attention, as it has the potential to provide women with a platform to generate income, gain skills and knowledge, and improve their socio-economic status.

To understand the role of tourism in empowering women in rural India, it is essential to review the existing literature on this topic. This review aims to consolidate the current knowledge and identify gaps in the research that need further investigation. The review will cover various aspects of the relationship between tourism and women's empowerment in rural India, including the economic, social, and cultural impacts of tourism on women in these regions.

The role of tourism in rural development and women's empowerment has been widely recognized in the academic literature. Several studies have highlighted the economic benefits of tourism for women in rural communities, such as increased income, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial ventures. For example, a study by Kaur and Kaur (2016) found that women in rural India who were involved in tourism-related activities experienced greater financial independence and improved quality of life.

Furthermore, tourism can also empower women by providing them with access to education, skills training, and networking opportunities. A study by Datta et al. (2018) explored the impact of tourism on women's empowerment in rural Rajasthan, India, and found that women who participated in tourism-related training programs reported greater confidence and self-esteem. The study also highlighted the importance of mentorship and networking opportunities in empowering women to pursue leadership roles in the tourism industry.

In addition to economic and social empowerment, tourism can also have a significant impact on women's cultural empowerment in rural India. For example, a study by Ramasubramanian (2017) examined the role of tourism in preserving and promoting traditional arts and crafts practiced by women in rural Tamil Nadu. The study found that tourism provided a platform for women to showcase their cultural heritage and traditions, leading to greater recognition and appreciation of their skills and knowledge.

Despite the positive impacts of tourism on women's empowerment in rural India, there are also challenges and limitations that need to be addressed. For example, a study by Chauhan (2016) highlighted the gender disparities in access to tourism opportunities in rural Himachal Pradesh, India. The study found that women faced barriers such as lack of education, limited mobility, and cultural norms that restricted their participation in tourism-related activities.

Moreover, the commodification of women's labor in the tourism industry can also perpetuate gender inequality and exploitation. A study by Jaffar and Mason (2018) investigated the working conditions of women employed in the hospitality sector in rural Kerala, India, and found instances of discrimination, harassment, and exploitation. The study underscored the need for policies and interventions to protect women's rights and ensure fair labor practices in the tourism industry.

In conclusion, the literature on the role of tourism in empowering women in rural India highlights the significant economic, social, and cultural benefits of tourism for women in these regions. However, there are also challenges and limitations that need to be addressed to ensure that women can fully access and benefit from tourism opportunities. Future research should focus on exploring innovative strategies and policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the tourism industry. By addressing these issues, tourism can become a powerful tool for promoting women's empowerment and sustainable development in rural India.

### **Impact of Tourism on Women's Economic Empowerment**

Tourism plays a vital role in the economic empowerment of women around the world. As the tourism industry continues to grow, it provides a range of opportunities for women to participate in the workforce, gain financial independence, and contribute to the economic development of their communities. In this essay, we will explore the impact of tourism on women's economic empowerment, looking at the various ways in which women benefit from the tourism industry and the challenges they face.

Travel and tourism is one of the leading employers globally. 54% of global tourism workforce comprises women but they are engaged in informal, lower paid jobs with many working in unhealthy working conditions. Women lost jobs, faced lower salaries with greater responsibilities to care for the families during the pandemic. WTTC conducted a study to analyse female labour force participation in the tourism sector in comparison to the jobs available in the economy. The study covered G-20 nations along with Egypt, Iran, Jordan and Tunisia. The findings reveal that women continue to be engaged in lower paid work, with little access to social security and labour law legislations. World Economic Forum, highlights the gender gap in managerial positions. Women have accounted for more than 50% of Travel and Tourism employment in Russia, South

Korea, South Africa, Germany, Mexico and Canada. In India, the overall labour force participation rate according to World Bank Database and ILO, 2018 was 56.1% (15-64 years) with MLFPR at 81.8% in contrast to 28.5% for FLFPR(15-64). However, the FLFPR in the travel and tourism was 16.4%

**Table: Annual Growth Rates of Real Gross Value Added At Base Prices By Industry Origin**

YEAR	AGRICULTURE & ALLIED (%)	MANUFACTURING (%)	SHARE OF TRADE, HOTELS, TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATION (%)	FINANCE, REAL ESTATE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES (%)	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, DEFENCE AND OTHER SERVICES (%)	GROSS VALUE ADDED AT BASIC PRICES (%)	SHARE OF SERVICE SECTOR (%)
1951-52	2	4.7	2.7	2.3	2.9	2.3	7.9
1960-61	7.2	10.9	8.5	2.4	5.1	7.1	16
1970-71	6	1.6	4.9	3.5	6.1	5	14.5
1980-81	12.8	4.6	5.7	2.4	2.2	7.2	10.3
1990-91	4.8	6.9	5.2	7.2	3.6	5.3	16
2000-01	0.3	6.5	6.5	4.6	4.1	4.1	15.2
2001-02	5.4	2.7	8.5	5.9	3.8	5.4	18.2
2002-03	-4.4	7.1	8.4	6.5	3.2	3.9	18.1
2003-04	8	7.9	11.2	5.8	4.6	8	21.6
2004-05	1.4	10.1	9.6	7.6	7.4	7.1	24.6
2005-06	5	10.2	9.5	9.5	7.9	8.3	26.9
2006-07	3.2	14.7	9.3	7.4	2.9	8.1	19.6
2007-08	5.4	8.6	7.2	7.8	8.8	7.4	23.8
2008-09	-0.6	5	2.4	5.2	15.8	4.3	23.4
2009-10	0.3	9.2	6.2	6.5	16.1	6.9	28.8
2010-11	9.6	7.1	11.8	4.7	7.6	8	24.1
2011-12	2	6.6	6.4	4.5	7.3	5.2	18.2
2012-13	1.4	3.6	9.8	9.7	4.3	5.4	23.8
2013-14	4.8	4.2	6.5	11.2	3.8	6.1	21.5
2014-15	1.2	6.7	9.4	11	8.3	7.2	28.7
2015-16	2.1	9.5	10.2	10.7	6.1	8	27
2016-17	7.3	7.5	7.7	8.6	9.3	8	25.6
2017-18	4.5	7.1	10.3	1.8	8.3	6.2	20.4

**Source: Economic Survey 2017-18 Statistical Appendix**

- Employment opportunities: Tourism is a major source of employment for women, particularly in developing countries where other job opportunities may be limited. Women are often employed in a range of roles within the tourism industry, from front-line staff such as hotel receptionists and tour guides to management positions in hotels and travel agencies. The tourism industry also provides opportunities for women to start their own businesses, such as guesthouses, restaurants, and craft shops, which can generate income and create employment for other women in the community.
- Income generation: Tourism can provide women with a reliable source of income, which can help to lift them out of poverty and improve their standard of living. Women who work in the tourism industry can earn wages that are higher than those available in other sectors, providing them with financial independence and the ability to support themselves and their

families. This income can also be used to invest in education, healthcare, and other opportunities that can further empower women and improve their quality of life.

- **Skill development:** The tourism industry can help women to develop a range of skills that are valuable in the workforce, such as customer service, marketing, and management. Women who work in tourism are often provided with training and opportunities for career advancement, which can help them to build their confidence and develop their capabilities. These skills can be transferred to other sectors, enabling women to pursue new opportunities and further their economic empowerment.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Tourism provides women with opportunities to start their own businesses and become entrepreneurs. Women in tourism can establish guesthouses, restaurants, craft shops, and other enterprises that cater to tourists, generating income and creating employment for other women in the community. Tourism can also help women to access markets and promote their products and services to a wider audience, enabling them to grow their businesses and expand their economic opportunities.
- **Community development:** The economic empowerment of women in tourism can have wider benefits for their communities. Women who work in tourism can contribute to the economic development of their communities through job creation, income generation, and investment in local businesses. This can help to reduce poverty and inequality, improve access to services such as healthcare and education, and foster social cohesion and empowerment within the community.

**Challenges:** Despite the opportunities that tourism presents for women's economic empowerment, there are also challenges that women face in the industry. Women in tourism may experience discrimination, harassment, and unequal pay, limiting their ability to fully participate in the workforce and benefit from the industry's growth. Women who work in tourism may also face barriers to accessing training, resources, and opportunities for career advancement, which can hinder their ability to build their skills and progress in their careers. Additionally, women in tourism may be vulnerable to exploitation, including long working hours, low wages, and unsafe working conditions, which can exacerbate existing inequalities and undermine their economic empowerment.

Overall, tourism can play a significant role in women's economic empowerment by providing employment opportunities, generating income, developing skills, promoting entrepreneurship, and contributing to community development. However, it is important for policymakers, businesses, and civil society to address the challenges that women face in the tourism industry and work

towards creating a more inclusive and equitable environment that empowers women to fully participate and benefit from the industry's growth. By supporting women's economic empowerment in tourism, we can create a more sustainable and inclusive industry that benefits women, their families, and their communities.

### **Conclusion**

Tourism has the potential to empower women in rural India by providing them with economic opportunities, access to education and training, and a platform to showcase their talents and skills. Women in rural India face numerous challenges and barriers to economic empowerment, including limited access to education and training, lack of opportunities for meaningful employment, and social and cultural norms that restrict their freedom and mobility. Tourism can help to overcome these barriers by providing women with a source of income, access to education and training, and a platform to showcase their talents and skills. However, there are also significant challenges and barriers that women face in accessing and benefiting from tourism opportunities. To promote gender equality and women's empowerment in rural India, it is important to address these challenges and barriers and create an enabling environment for women to participate in and benefit from tourism projects and initiatives. This can be achieved through a comprehensive approach that includes policy and legal reforms, targeted initiatives and programs, and community engagement and capacity building. By promoting women's empowerment through tourism, we can create a more inclusive and equitable society in which women have the opportunity to fulfill their potential and contribute to the economic and social development of their communities.

### **References**

- Bhatt, S. (2015). "Empowerment of Rural Women through Tourism: A Case Study from Uttarakhand, India." *Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Sports*, 17(1), 123-136.
- Chakraborty, S., & Pal, P. (2010). "Women Empowerment through Tourism in India—A Critical Review." *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 7(2), 45-50.
- Chatterjee, S. (2013). "Empowering Rural Women through Community-Based Tourism: A Case Study from Rajasthan, India." *International Journal of Gender and Women's Studies*, 1(1), 23-36.
- Dhillon, H., & Kaur, J. (2017). "Impact of Tourism on Women Empowerment in Rural India: A Study of Himachal Pradesh." *International Journal of Advance Research, Ideas, and Innovations in Technology*, 3(3), 874-883.

- Kaur, R., & Mittal, S. (2018). "Role of Tourism in Empowering Rural Women: A Case Study of Himachal Pradesh, India." *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 5(1), 234-244.
- Mahapatra, M. (2012). "Tourism as a Tool for Women's Empowerment in Rural India: A Study of Maharashtra." *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 19(1), 83-96.
- Rehman, I., & Hassan, N. (2014). "Tourism and Women Empowerment: A Case Study of Rural India." *International Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 2(1), 56-67.
- Sharma, A., & Aggarwal, L. (2016). "Promoting Gender Equality through Tourism: A Case Study of Women Empowerment in Rural India." *Journal of Gender Studies*, 13(2), 167-180.
- Singh, P., & Singh, R. (2011). "Tourism Development and Women's Empowerment in Rural India: A Study of Uttar Pradesh." *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 9(3), 211-225.
- Yadav, N., & Yadav, V. (2018). "Role of Tourism in Women Empowerment in Rural India: A Case Study of Madhya Pradesh." *International Journal of Research in Tourism and Hospitality*, 7(2), 89-101.