

RURAL TOURISM IN INDIA: A NEW FRONTIER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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The global tourism industry has become a major engine of economic growth and development, playing an important role in earning foreign exchange. It ranks among the leading sectors worldwide, contributing about 14 percent to the global GDP. According to the International Tourism Organisation, the number of tourists is expected to reach 1.9 billion by 2030, accounting for nearly 23 percent of the world's population. The Global Tourism Authority adds that there will be a significant growth in the variety of products available to travellers seeking a genuine rural experience over the next five to ten years. In the majority of India's rural areas, rural tourism is seen as an emerging strategy for sustainable development and cultural heritage. The purpose of this essay is to examine rural tourism in India and its potential benefits to rural communities, while also acknowledging its positive and negative impacts on both rural and urban areas, and providing an overall glance at the current rural tourism services in the country.
