



## RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GUJARAT: VIEWS OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

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### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** Sustainable Tourism development in the rural region has become must which includes the interests of all stakeholders, along with tourism promotion and tourism growth. This study aims to identify the opinion of stakeholders to achieve sustainable rural tourism development.

**Design:** Exploratory Research and descriptive research.

**Methodology & Approach:** Qualitative and Quantitative. Primary data was collected through in depth interview and survey. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument. Non-probability sampling procedure is used. Sample size of Community is 262 and of Tour operator is 167.

**Findings:** It has been found that, there should be development of regional tourism workforce and infrastructure, introduction of home stay policy, promotion of tourism friendly atmosphere, showcasing Gujarat beyond God and spirituality and creation of multiple activities in rural areas.

**Originality of the research:** This research paper is original and has not been published nor under any publishing procedure.

**Keywords:** Community, tour operators, government, sustainable rural tourism development, Gujarat

## 1. Introduction

India is a country, where 70% of the population resides in rural area and thus it has a huge potential for rural tourism development. It has been found that, due to the less earning opportunities and for better development of life, the people from rural areas are shifting towards the urban life. Therefore, it is very important to focus on this social transformation and develop the employment opportunities within the rural areas. Tourism is identified as an effective way for improvising the rural areas (Pradhan, 2019). Rural tourism helps to have the employment and alternative income generation opportunities, infrastructure development, stimulation of external investment, appreciation of local culture, preservation of environment and heritage and repopulation in the rural areas (Tosun, 1999), community empowerment, sustainable local economic development (Wijijayanti et al, 2020).

### **1.1 Objectives of the paper:**

The research paper aims:

- To study the opinion of the community, government officials and tour operators to achieve sustainable rural tourism development.
- To study the opinions of government officials and tour operators for rural tourism promotion to achieve the sustainable rural tourism growth.

### **1.2 The nature of the problem:**

In India, rural tourism has very great potential, but due to some drawbacks, it has not flourished like other forms of tourism. Many a times, people find it difficult to get information about such places and they are being explored to some limited destinations only. Apart from this, they may also face some problems related to payment, booking and quality (Team , 2010). Rural tourism is also imposing some challenges for the local area such as: distortion of local environment and culture due to commodification, economic leakages, seasonal demands and inflation in local prices (Tosun , 1999), marketing, uniformed structure at central level, legislations at regional levels, cooperation with local people (Khartishvili et al, 2019).

It has been found that, the participation of local people in sustainable rural tourism development helps to gain comparative advantage, but not the competitive advantage. Whereas, the participation of government, private sector and non-governmental organizations contributes to gain the competitive advantage but not he comparative advantage for sustainable rural tourism (Wardana et al, 2021). Further, the farmers are also inclined to diversify their earning sources. They would like to be involved in rural tourism providing the support of stakeholders (Peira et al, 2021). Rural tourism does not require only the consideration of the place and enhancing the experiences of the tourists, but also of the sustainable development based on community characteristics (Rosalina et al, 2021). Further, there should be sustainable tourism which focuses on the conservation of the environment and culture of the region for which both tourists and local people are liable for their constructive participation (Davardoust & Karahan, 2021).

Holistic Tourism development in the region has become must which includes the interests of all stakeholders associated with it. At the same time, tourism promotion and growth is also essential to attract more number of tourists to the destination. Thus, sustainable tourism development and sustainable rural tourism growth, both will lead to the overall development of the region. Further, it also requires having appropriate marketing approaches, unified structure at central level and legislations at regional level in coordination with all the respective stakeholders at the local level (Khartishvili et al, 2019).

It has been found that during Covid-19, rural tourism has been proved to be a great alternative for the urban tourism (Vaishar & Št'astná, 2022). It is also considered one of the best alternatives for employment generation in agriculture and mountain area (Khartishvili et al, 2019). Further, the tourists are giving preference to the rural tourism with risk aversion attitude during Covid-19 (Zhu & Deng , 2020). Rural tourism can be seen as one of the best alternative to solve the problems of rural and agricultural areas and it can be used as a persistent tool to have the social development of the rural people where people do care for the clean, stable and valuable natural surroundings (Kataya, 2021).

### **1.3 Current state of knowledge:**

Rural tourism has been introduced by Government of India in National Tourism Policy, 2002. Up till now, Ministry of tourism has identified 51 such potential sites for rural tourism in India, out of which 36 have been developed. The MoU between the World Bank and AirBnB is such kind of initiative so to provide the alternative accommodation-home sharing to the tourists and also to generate the

employment opportunity for the local people of India and Sri Lanka (Kumar, 2018). AirBnB is also working in coordination with local organizations for the upliftment of the rural women and young people through tourism in rural areas of South Africa's Western Cape, China's greater Guilin region, and India. AirBnB along with Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has made it possible to empower the rural women of Gujarat state by providing training through Airbnb's platform (Rifai & Lehane, 2017). Ministry of Tourism has taken many initiatives to promote and develop rural tourism in India such as: Swadesh Darshan, Dekho Apna Desh, identification of Rural Tourism Circuit in India. It has also introduced a National Tourism Award to inspire all the people who have executed tourism projects in the field of rural or Agri tourism projects (PBNS, 2022). Apart from these schemes, other essential aspects related to rural tourism development is in need to be taken care of, such as: improved accessibility, infrastructure, connectivity, tourists' safety, healthcare facilities, training of local people and assessment of tourists' activities impact on rural environment (Forum, 2019).

Tourism industry is one of the most important industries in terms of development of Gujarat. It is an engine of growth for the economy in the state. Tourism is a bright revenue generation industry that put Gujarat on the map of world. Further tourism is a major sector contributing to employment generation. One can find list of events, fairs and festivals throughout the year so as to attract tourists in peak, lean and off seasons. It equally concentrates on all types of tourism which are possible in state. The new tourism policy of the state 2021-2025 aims for sustainable development in line with 'wildlife tourism', 'coastal tourism', 'cruise tourism', 'wellness tourism' and 'rural tourism' (Kaushik, 2021). Further, to motivate the rural tourism, there is a provision of Rs. 5 Lakh for organizing fairs in rural areas of Gujarat which promotes the culture, handlooms and handicrafts (PTI, 2021).

## **2. Theoretical and conceptual background/framework:**

Earlier tourism destination was considered for maximization of visitors. But the meaning of destination is changed from traditional to contemporary, i.e. from visitors' perspective to management perspective. Destination management also moves towards an integrated approach. The destination needs to be maintained and grow with sustainability, so as not to harm its present nature as well as keep it protected for future use (Fabricius & Carter, 2007). As Tourism destination management is not the responsibility of any one entity, it becomes imperative to look beyond visitor maximization at the destination and change the perspective from unconvincing accountability and responsibility towards an influential or convincing accountability and responsibility of all stakeholders. Rather than looking from only tourists and tourism industry point of view, the support of integration approach will result in sustainable development of the destination. Tourists' activities and tourism development in the area may cause destruction of nature, conflicts in society and culture and negatively affect the host community of tourism destination. And hence it is necessary to know the views of all relevant destination stakeholders, including community, tour operators and government for better development of the area.

The literature review includes the information about rural tourism, sustainable rural tourism development and Gujarat Government efforts for rural tourism development.

### **2.1 Rural Tourism**

Rural tourism is defined as the tourism activity that displays art, culture, heritage and rural life in rural area. Further, it should include the movement of people towards the rural area from their regular place of residence for a period of twenty-four hours to six months so as to have pleasure or leisure. There are various forms of tourism which are connected with the rural tourism, such as: Agri-tourism, eco-tourism, farm tourism, forest tourism and green tourism (Tosun, 1999). Rural tourism involves

multiple stakeholders, such as: government, panchayats, community, tour operators, travel agents and tourists. Without appropriate integration of all these may lead to the unappropriated planning and uneven development in the rural area (Pradhan, 2019). There are four areas of rural tourism, namely (Ayazlar & Ayazalar, 2015): 1) Rural Life –crafts, local events, food, music, agri tourism, 2) Rural Activities- birding, cycling, fishing, walking, water sports, 3) Rural Heritage- traditional, architectural, and industrial and 4) Country side- mountain, lakes, rivers and forests.

Due to rural tourism there can be an improvement in standard of living in local people, less likelihood towards migration to urban areas, recognition of cultural heritage, boost in environmental and traditional local practices and overall sustainable development (Falak et al, 2016).

## **2.2 Sustainable rural tourism development**

Without proper planning or management tourism can damage the destination's environment; cause social and cultural conflict and alienate the communities that host tourism. Sustainable tourism development manages the impacts of tourism on the destination's environment, economy and community and maintains and enhances the destination's resources for the present and future needs of both tourists and the communities that host them. Sustainable rural tourism development considers three aspects: 1) Environmental conservation which is resource based, 2) Planning and a control concern which is power based and 3) Economic concerns in the area (Tosun , 1999). Rural tourism can be managed by incorporating several methods, such as: limiting the number of tourists visits, local people's training, rural tourism which is based on community, encouraging the local arts and culture, managing the traffic flow, conservation projects (Stainton, 2021).

There are other approaches with which the sustainable development can be achieved. According to VICE model, there should be a framework which presents destination management as the interactions between the visitors, the industry that serves them, the community that hosts them and the environment where this interaction takes place. According to UNWTO, three pillars of sustainable development should (Stange, Brown, & International, 2013) : make optimal use of environmental resources, maintaining essential ecosystems and helping conserve biodiversity, respect socio-cultural authenticity, conserve built and living cultural heritage, and contribute to cross-cultural understanding and tolerance and ensure long-term socio-economic benefits, fairly distributed to all community stakeholders, including stable employment and income-earning opportunities, social services, and poverty alleviation.

The sustainable development should focus on conservation of resources and environment, betterment of local people in terms of employment, working conditions and purchasing power, reducing the effect of economic spin-offs for the local people and customers (Tixier, 2009). There are different types of community participation for the development activities of the region, such as (Tosun , 1999): when the purpose and content of community participation clearly originate with people themselves, it is known as *active participation*. *Passive participation* occurs where people are merely involved in the implementation of decision about which they were not consulted. When the community has the opportunity to directly convey its message regarding developmental issues to the decisions makers, it is known as *direct participation*. In *Indirect participation* people's opinions are conveyed to those individuals in whom the community vests responsibility for making decisions through institutionalized and episodic channels of communication. In *formal participation*, rules and content of participation are determined by government. During *Informal participation*, community development staff and members of local communities or between local leaders and community development staff have unofficial or unsanctioned interaction. When community participates voluntary, base-up without external support, it is known as spontaneous participation. The sustainable tourism development should help in conservation and protection of natural and cultural resources and residents of tourism

areas should not suffer from a deteriorated environment and social problems (Taneja , 2006). Community based sustainable tourism should focus on empowerment of local people, generation of income and improvement in standard of living (Pongponrat, 2011). He also suggests involving local people in decision making procedure. There should be small capital investments by the local people themselves, so as to make them able for undertaking the development, monitoring the undesirable consequences and exercising the control over the pace of social changes (Sakata & Prideaux, 2013).

### ***2.3 Gujarat Government efforts for rural tourism development***

Located on the west coast of India, Gujarat has a long coast-line of about 1600 km, i.e. the longest among all the states of the country. It is covering an area of 1,96,024 sq km (5.96 % of India's total area). Bounded by Arabian Sea on the west, by Rajasthan on the north-east, by Madhya Pradesh on the south-east, and by Maharashtra on the south, Gujarat shares a common international border with the Pakistan at the north-western fringe. Gujarat is comprised of an inclusive kind of attractions with breath taking locations and scenic landscapes. Land of Krishna and Mahatma Gandhi, pilgrim centres, Gujarat is a melting point of several civilizations of rich culture and heritage. It is home to the unique archaeological sites. The State has increase the number of tourists to Gujarat with the help of effective development in infrastructure undertaken by the Corporation. To attract more tourists, a number of tourist hubs have been developed, such as Ahmedabad Metro, Ahmedabad Rural (north Gujarat), Surat (south Gujarat), Vadodara (central Gujarat), Rajkot, Junagadh and Jamnagar (Saurashtra) and Bhuj (Kutch) (Gujarat Tourism , 2022). Diversity with safety and warm hospitality is the USP of Gujarat Tourism and thus a perfect destination for the entire family. Picturesque landscapes, historical sites and long stretches of Coastlines make a visit to Gujarat reviving, relaxing and inspiring (Gujarat, 2020).

The state government is actively working on effective use of tourism resources so as to attract more tourists. The effective efforts of the Gujarat government have resulted in increase in tourists into the state. The State's Tourism Policy (2003-2010) under "Gujarat Infrastructure Agenda - Vision 2010" prepared by Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB) highlights diversifications of tourism products in order to attract more tourists. The main objective of the state's Tourism Policy (2003-2010) was to undertake intensive development of tourism in the State and thereby increase employment opportunities (Vansiya & Ragothaman, 2012). While During 2015-20 tourism policy, the government of Gujarat has vision to position Gujarat as a vibrant tourist destination, with an emphasis on improving visitor experience, livelihood linkages, environmental concerns and enhancing investment opportunities, thus catapulting tourism as one of the most important economic drivers, leading to sustainable development and inclusive growth in the State ( Industries and Mines Department Government of Gujarat , 2015).

The state tourism department is actively involved in promoting the destinations of the state by implementing different strategies such as ad campaigns, road shows, events, international kite festivals, Rann utsav (DNA, 2012). One of the challenges, that state faced was accommodation after the successful campaign featuring Amitabh Bachhan. Homestay was one of the solutions having a dual purpose of livelihood or extra income for the rural people and for the tourists to have an experience of rural life. To attract more potential tourists, the destination is in need to have the holistic and swift infrastructural development, including the basic amenities in the form of rest houses, electricity & water supply, sanitation, and sewerage facilities. The accessibility of these areas also need improvement.

The government of Gujarat is concerned about sustainable tourism as the state has considered tourism as one of the significant agent of economy development that leads to sustainable and a comprehensive development. The state government is focusing on infrastructure development,

promotion and policies so as to enhance tourism in the state (Maitreyee, 2013). The state is actively working on effective use of tourism resources so as to attract more tourists and get more benefits by it. It becomes essential for the state to be developed as a tourism destination as it has abundant natural resources of rural areas. The state has announced the New Tourism Policy, 2021; that focuses on 'Vocal for Local' in the direction of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission, so as to increase the level of local employment. The policy also focuses on promotion of caravans and rural experience-based tourism in the state (ET Government, 2021). The tourism policy also includes the assistance of Rs.5 lakhs per year per Rural Tourism Fair Organizer for conducting all-inclusive fairs and festivals that displays culture, dance, handloom, handicraft within Gujarat (IGBC, 2021). Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. is planning to promote local handicrafts to international tourists in association with Gujarat State Handloom and Handicraft Development Corporation Limited. According to the new tourism policy, the hotels and resorts will be remunerated with Rs. 4000 per month per person upto 6 months, if they recruit local tour guides (Kaushik, 2021).

The state government has begun to focus on attracting more tourists and development of tourism infrastructure along with benefits to the environment, society and the economy. The state has collaborated with other service providers of tourism so as to promote the state tourism (Press Trust of India, 2013). Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. has simplified the procedure for tour operators and hoteliers to get registered (India Infoline News Service, 2014). The state government is also giving incentives to film producers of Bollywood for shooting at different locations of Gujarat, so as to promote state tourism. For promotion of tourism destinations of the state, Gujarat tourism has implemented a strategy that focuses on development of infrastructure including hygiene, public convenience, security of tourists, and involvement of private sector investment for development of hotels and resorts, development of eco-tourism centres (Industrial Extension Bureau Gujarat, 2013). Blueprint for infrastructure in Gujarat (BIG) 2020 developed with objectives to develop tourist circuits, tourism destinations and to execute tourism projects (Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board, 2022).

The government is involving the community for the conservation of the environment. We can see the efforts of the state government to involve the community for the planning and implementation of tourism projects in the state as well as their concern for betterment of the society by providing more employment opportunities. Various strategies that have been formulated by the state to develop tourism, related to (Industries and Mines Department Government of Gujarat, 2015): Government has planned 1) to develop new airports, 2) to involve the local community for development of rural tourism in Rann of Kutch, 3) to encourage participation of the private sector for development of tourism projects, 4) put emphasis on cultural aspects, 5) to get response of tourists and other stakeholders on a regular basis, 6) to generate self-employment opportunities for local people, 7) to encourage green projects with financial support, 8) to construct and maintain public convenience facilities. The major concern is to have sustainable tourism practices in the state.

The state government is appreciating units that focus on environment protection with special recognition. The state tourism board is also putting emphasis on innovative tourism projects, participation in different schemes laid down by Government of India, association with Central Government, development of State-Level Empowered Committee (SLEC) that facilitates to less impairments and consolidation of Single-Window Clearance Cell.

Gujarat is first to establish the Global Warming Department in Asia, that concerns for greening of tourism in cities of Gujarat. Further, it also gives an alternative to urban tourism and helps to manage the biodiversity through rural tourism. It includes numerous activities which do not prevail in urban areas of Gujarat, such as: purchasing handicraft products, visit to fairs, festivals, museums, parks, hiking and exploring the rural life, cuisine, traditions and culture etc... (Gujarat, 2020). As of Hodka

village in Kutch district, the central government has given the approval for the development of three rural tourist destinations of Gujarat, namely: Nageshwar, Malegaon and Dandi, under the scheme of Rural Tourism Infrastructure Development. Under this scheme, each of this rural tourism destination is liable to receive the support of rs. 50 lakh for infrastructure development and Rs. 20 lakh for promotion, training and employment generation. While the rural tourism, the state government has given the due consideration to the tourists' by developing the parks, water adventure sports, eco-friendly tourism activities, and local people by providing an opportunity to be a part of the tourism industry, earning money and to sustain their skills, traditions, culture, art and environment. This ultimately will result in to the achievement of sustainability of the place, people and the visitors (Discover India , 2021).

### 3. Methodology:

For this study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been adopted. For gaining awareness and better understanding of the topic, exploratory research design was used in the study, where the views of knowledgeable people of Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. were collected through in-depth interviews. For describing responses of community and tour operators regarding destination management, descriptive research design is used and survey was used as the research method. Both primary and secondary data sources were used for collecting the required information for the study. For secondary data government reports, journals, newspapers and websites, publications of Indian and foreign government, books, reports of association and researchers, and statistics were used. For primary data, responses of government officials, tour operators and community were used.

**Table: 1 Sampling Plan and Data Collection**

| No. | Sample Unit  | Sample Size   |       | Sampling Procedure                         | Methods (Primary)   | Instruments                   |
|-----|--|---------------|-------|--|---|-------------------------------|
|     |  | Population    | Total |  |   |                               |
| 1.  | Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd.                              | 12 officials* | 5     | Non-Probability Convenience                | In- depth interview (in person 100%)                                      | Semi structured questionnaire |
| 2.  | Registered tour operators of Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. | 167**         | 167   | Non-Probability Convenience                | Survey (Mail questionnaire 100%)  | Structured questionnaire      |
| 3.  | Community  | 1325833***    | 262   | Non-Probability (Convenience and snowball) | Survey (in person 33.59%<br>Mail questionnaire 18.32%<br>Snowball 48.09%) | Structured questionnaire      |

\*Offices. <http://www.gujarattourism.com/general/view/3>

\*\*Registered Tour Operators. <http://www.gujarattourism.com/tour-operator/registered-tour-operators>

\*\*\*Districts of Gujarat <https://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/districtlist/gujarat.html>

**Table:2 Data Analysis Techniques**

| Sr. No. | Data Analysis Techniques   | Sample units   | Data Analysis Techniques                   |
|---------|----------------------------|--|--|
| 1       | Quantitative Data Analysis | Government officials and registered tour operators of TCGL | Subjective interpretation                  |
| 2       | Qualitative Data Analysis  | Community  | Chi square Analysis and Cross tab analysis |

Source: Primary

For exploratory research design, qualitative analysis was done. It includes the subjective interpretation of government officials' and tour operators' response for tourism destination management. For descriptive research design quantitative data analysis was used. Various techniques used for quantitative data analysis were: Chi- Square analysis, Cross tab analysis.

## 4. Results and Discussion:

### 4.1 Community's response:

There are total 262 respondents. Out of them 143 are male and 119 are female. Majority of the respondents (42.4%) believe that the government is concentrating on tourists followed by tourism industry (22.5%) than of the local people (21.4%) and environment (13.7%).

**Table 3 local people's view on government's focus while developing tourism in the area**

|  |                  | Gender |        | Total  |
|--|------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|  |                  | Male   | Female |        |
| Government in your area is concentrating on facilities and comfort of: | Tourists         | 51.0%  | 31.9%  | 42.4%  |
|  | Community        | 16.1%  | 27.7%  | 21.4%  |
|  | Tourism industry | 25.9%  | 18.5%  | 22.5%  |
|  | Environment      | 7.0%   | 21.8%  | 13.7%  |
| Total  |                  | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

(Source: primary data)

34.7% respondents believe that, the tourism development in the area is neutral. Only 26.3% respondents believe that the region has appropriate development of tourism.

**Table 4 Local people's view on tourism development in the area**

|   |                                      | Gender |        | Total  |
|---|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|
|   |                                      | Male   | Female |        |
| What do you think about level of development in tourism in your area? | Appropriate development of tourism   | 34.3%  | 16.8%  | 26.3%  |
|   | Neutral                              | 30.8%  | 39.5%  | 34.7%  |
|   | Inappropriate development of tourism | 18.9%  | 19.3%  | 19.1%  |
|   | Not at all developed for tourism     | 16.1%  | 24.4%  | 19.8%  |
| Total   |                                      | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

(source: primary data)

77.1% respondents (74.8% male and 79.8% female) believe that tourists' accommodation in residents' house will provide first-hand experience to tourists.

**Table 5 local people's view for homestay concept**

|  |     | Gender |        | Total  |
|--|-----|--------|--------|--------|
|  |     | Male   | Female |        |
| Do you believe that tourists' accommodation in your house will provide first- hand experience to the tourists? | Yes | 74.8%  | 79.8%  | 77.1%  |
|  | No  | 25.2%  | 20.2%  | 22.9%  |
| Total  |     | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

(source: primary data)



Out of 77.1% respondents who agree that tourists' accommodation with residents will provide first-hand experience to tourists- 58.8 % respondents (58.0% male and 59.7% female) show their readiness to accommodate tourists.

**Table 6 local people's readiness for homestay concept**

|  |                | Gender |        | Total  |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|--------|
|  |                | Male   | Female |        |
| If yes, are you ready to accommodate tourists in your house? | Not applicable | 25.2%  | 20.2%  | 22.9%  |
|  | Yes            | 58.0%  | 59.7%  | 58.8%  |
|  | No             | 16.8%  | 20.2%  | 18.3%  |
| Total  |                | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

#### **4.2 Local people's response various tourism aspects with respect to tourists and their activities in the area:**

81.7% respondents (61.2% male and 38.8% female) believe that tourism is encouraging local employment. 86.3% respondents (83.2% male and 89.9% female) believe that more local people should be involved as full time employee in tourism business. 68.3% respondents (74.8% male and 64.5% female) believe that tourism and visitors are beneficial to area. 72.9 % respondents (74.8% male and 70.6% female) believe that tourists and their activities are affecting daily life of local people. 86.6% respondents (83.9% male and 89.9% female) believe that local people must be involved in tourism destination planning. 54.6% respondents (50.3% male and 59.7% female) believe that there should be a difference in entry fees for places of tourists' attractions for residents and foreigners.

**Table: 7 Chi- Square statistics for local people's response regarding tourism development and their activities in the area**

|  | Chi-Square | Df | Asymp. Sig. |
|--|------------|----|-------------|
| Government concentration on development                                | 46.916c    | 3  | .000        |
| Level of tourism development   | 16.565c    | 4  | .001        |
| Tourists' stay with locals   | 76.962a    | 3  | .000        |
| Local people's readiness to stay with tourists                         | 77.160b    | 1  | .000        |
| Tourism is encouraging local employment                                | 105.176a   | 2  | .000        |
| More local people should be involved in tourism                        | 137.786a   | 1  | .000        |
| Tourism is beneficial for the area                                     | 35.176a    | 1  | .000        |
| Tourists and their activities are affecting daily life of local people | 54.962a    | 1  | .000        |
| Local people involvement in tourism destination planning               | 140.702a   | 1  | .000        |
| Different entry fees for foreigners and residents                      | 2.198a     | 1  | .138        |

(source: primary data)

There is a significant difference in the response of local people about Government concentration on development (p=.000), Level of tourism development (p=.001), Tourists' stay with locals (p=.000), Local people's readiness to stay with tourists (p=.000), Tourism is encouraging local employment (p=.000), More local people should be involved in tourism (p=.000), Tourism is beneficial for the area (p=.000), Tourists and their activities are affecting daily life of local people (p=.000), Local

people involvement in tourism destination planning ( $p=.000$ ). There is no significant difference in the response of local people about different entry fees for foreigners and residents ( $p=.138$ ).

### **4.3 Government officials' response:**

Government official suggests developing infrastructure, safety and security, hygiene and sanitation, building tourism workforce within the region, involvement of local people and introducing Home stay policy to meet the demand of tourists, increasing average visitors' length of stay and expenditure, using media, organizing events, collaboration and cobranding with institutes, organizations and other states. Other suggestions are: 1) Promote or advertise on regular basis so that tourists are always updated with latest information about destinations; 2) Projection of new forms of tourism such as: Agri-tourism, medical tourism, business tourism, industrial tourism so as to build a strong and vibrant identity of Gujarat as a tourism destination; 3) Take support of film tourism which is helpful for attracting more tourists, destination publicity in film and employment generation at shooting location; 4) Focus on event based tourism to gain competitive advantage over rivals; 5) Training and skill development- guide and hospitality (learning behaviour to deal with tourists) so as to sensitize the industry players and business to contribute more towards the development of workforce in tourism; 6) Awareness creation in people to pursue this profession through advertisement; 7) Tourism institutions should provide courses such as: ticketing, food and beverage, housekeeping, etiquettes, tours and travels and civil aviation; 8) Collaboration at community level with forest department to preserve value of nature; 9) Coordinate with all local authorities to protect tourism resources; 10) Home stay policy to interrelate demand of tourists and residents. It will augment the accommodation facilities and provide a pip into the rich cultural heritage; 11) Do have the presence of community and stakeholders in terms of participation in the events ad festivals so as to spread benefits of tourism; 12) TCGL collaboration with ASI to preserve world heritage sites is yet to be made; 13) Develop adequate resting, parking facilities at the congested tourist locations so as to manage tourist flow at peak hours; 14) Promotion and creating tourist centric infrastructure in Gujarat so as to maximize tourists visit in Gujarat; 15) Development of crafts of artisans of Gujarat through promotions at exhibitions during festivals and mahotsavs- stalls for specific artisans; 16) Build activities and invite investors to engage potential tourists at places which are not having multiple tourism attractions or activities; 17) Try to create more and more activities and things to do in an event or in a destination so as to increase average visitors' length of stay and expenditure.

### **Tour operators' response**

Tour operators suggests involving local people in planning, developing tourist destinations with special focus on infrastructure, sanitation and hygiene and providing training to the tribes of the area. For tourism promotion, they suggest having tourism friendly atmosphere, showcasing Gujarat beyond God and spirituality and creating multiple activities at the destination. Other suggestions are: 1) Involvement of community in different activities will lead to comprehensive development efforts at the destination; 2) Government should ensure all tourists' places have world class toilets; 3) Ban use of plastics in tourists' places; 4) Spitting should be punishable offense; 5) Showcase Gujarat beyond God and spirituality; 6) Find out places, its importance and make interesting story of it for publicity; 7) More use of social media for promotion and advertising; 8) Promote Gujarat all around the world by doing road shows; 9) Pre- planning with fixed price of packages; 10) Low costs of logistics for tours within Gujarat; 11) Try to serve tourism product at a value for money; 12) All entrance fees and monument charges are brought under affordable prices; 13) Tribes should be trained and can be used as guides for village tours; 14) Special training to police, rickshaw and taxi drivers, hotel staff and general public; 15) Develop quality guides; 16) Basic infrastructure such as

on way restaurants, toilets, monument guides are made arranged; 17) Develop road transport to make journey comfortable; 18) More international airports with direct flight connectivity to Gujarat.

## 5. Conclusion:

There is a need to have the holistic approach with the integrated efforts of the concerned stakeholders for rural tourism development. The state government tourism officials put emphasis on promotional activities, infrastructure development, incorporating sustainable development in state tourism policy, motivating stakeholders through various schemes and involvement of community participation. Tour operators suggested having more focus on infrastructure development, multiple tourism activities, legislation for tourists' activities, improved accessibility to the places, training and development of local people for being included in tourism industry and creation of employment generation opportunities and spreading awareness at national and international level. According to the local people, the major focus of the government is on attracting more tourists and developing the tourism industry. Further, they believe that, the local people and the environment are given less consideration and the development of tourism is not in appropriate level in the area. They also believe that the homestay will enhance the tourists' experience to the area and are ready to accommodate the visitors in their houses. They consider that the tourism helps them to have employment generation, but at the same time, tourism activities also affect in their daily life and therefore, they insist to be included in destination planning. By recognizing the importance of rural tourism to the area and the local people, implementation of sound strategies should be done. To reduce the distortion of local environment and culture, to enhance the social transformation, to generate the employment opportunities within the local area and to attract more tourists, sustainable tourism development and sustainable tourism growth should be at prime concern.

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