



Toti Jharna (Waterfall): Host-Guest Perspectives of an Off-beat Rural Tourist Destination in Jharkhand, India

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Abstract: Rural tourism has emerged as a means that is employed by many countries to facilitate economic and cultural development and to assist in the protection and preservation of ethnoecological heritage. The article is an attempt to explore the ethnoecological potential of an off-beat destination named *Tuti (Toti) Jharna*, a perennial waterfall located in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand state, India. The article tries to explore the main socio-cultural issues in promoting ethno-eco-tourism in the selected destination with regard to the conservation of eco-cultural heritage that needs to be addressed through more effective tourism planning. To integrate understanding a mixed method of research has been adopted. The study expects that the findings could be used by tourism sectors, planning agencies, the business community, ethnic minority organizations and research institutions in planning, managing, and developing ethno-eco-tourism.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Ethno-ecotourism, Perennial Waterfall, *Toti Jharna* (waterfall).

1. Introduction

Rural Tourism has gained immense importance in the last two decades and has created a niche impact on tourists' minds as a special interest form. According to Irina-Virginia Drăgulănescu and Maricica Druț (2012), tourism development in rural areas aims to solve key business objectives outside of motivation and satisfaction of tourism and economic issues related to the depopulation of areas caused by the migration of rural population to

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urban centres. Rural tourism is playing a significant role not only in the global scenario but also has the potential to become equally important in rural India. Such a form of tourism not only provides rewarding and individualized holiday products to tourists by ensuring absolute peace from monotonous urban city life and its traffic, noise, and pollution but also generates employment for the local community and diversifies the economy and regional employment. Even though the concept is relatively new; it can definitely be useful if it is sensibly nurtured in a country like India, where almost 68.84% population reside in 6, 38,000 villages where most of the villagers are mainly dependent on agricultural activities and are eagerly looking for alternative job scope on an urgent basis for survival, as many a time due to drought, flood like natural calamities they suffer a lot and even incident like suicide is not rare one in rural farmer-communities.

Like many other forms of tourism, rural tourism has also positive and negative impacts and those affect both rural as well as urban life. Hence its significance is not ignorable. Seeing the stressful urban lifestyles leading towards “counter-urbanization” syndrome, growing curiosity of urban people regarding rural culture and heritages, downfall of income level from agriculture and related works, lack of alternative way outs for earning sufficient money, scope for new business opportunities, changing attitude in Indian and global tourists’ behaviour in terms of nature awareness and increasing demand for niche tourism and green products -it is evident that the future of rural tourism in India is going to be very promising one. In this connection, the role of the Government and local monitoring bodies is going to be very crucial. Govt. should educate rural villagers to enhance their communication skills, create a sense of ownership, make them aware of the value of their culture and heritage and motivate them to take active participation. Side by side encouraging local entrepreneurs, private enterprises, investors, and other tourism stakeholders to come under a common umbrella for basic rural infrastructure development activities is also essential. The development of the environmental movement in the 1980s aided in the development and expansion of the availability and range of environmentally friendly vacation types other than those associated with mass tourism. Alternative tourism is defined as tourism that is environmentally friendly and respects the social and cultural values of local communities, allowing both hosts and guests to enjoy positive and worthwhile interactions and shared experiences (Wearing and Neil 2000, 389).

An exploratory study was conducted in the Charu and Rohandih Villages of Ormanjhi Block, Jharkhand, to observe the hosts’ perceptions of developing an offbeat attraction as a tourist destination. Ethno-ecotourism is a specialised, niche market that has emerged as the tourism industry has diversified into “alternative” or “special interest” types of tourism such as nature and adventure tourism. Jharkhand offers numerous

opportunities for rural tourism, ethno-tourism, eco-tourism, and mass tourism. As a result, Toti/Tuti Jharna has been designated as an offbeat tourism destination, with opportunities in marketing, cultural values and beliefs, and the tourism industry.

2. Some Earlier Studies on Rural Tourism in India

After independence, the government was paying more attention towards the growth of key areas like agriculture, industry, infrastructure, etc. Tourism was not on their priority list. Whatever growth happened, was on its own merit. Although tourism has started receiving some attention in the last decade, rural tourism has never been given any priority (Bordoloi and Kalita 2012, 2069). Worldwide tourism is ranked the second highest revenue-generating industry next to the oil industry. It is necessary to differentiate between different types of tourists to understand and analyse their purpose of visit. There are different ways to attract and retain customers. There is a large potential market for rural tourism especially for foreign tourists, which has not yet developed because the government has not taken up any systematic approach. It will not only bring people of dissimilar cultures, faiths, languages, and lifestyles together but will also provide an expansive outlook towards life. It will not only generate employment for the people but it can also develop social, cultural, and educational values. It is a type of nature-based tourism that unravels the essence of rural life, culture, art, and heritage in natural surroundings, thereby creating an incredible effect on the development of the local economy and socio-cultural scenario of the area.

The purpose of reviewing earlier literature is to understand the background of the study and thereby conduct further extensive study. Rural tourism emphasizes actively contributing to the rural lifestyle. It can be a variant of ecotourism or ethno-tourism. Even though a vast array of scholars and industry experts from the world over have researched tourism and specifically rural tourism, it is not possible to study and include all, but some of the major ones are notably mentioned.

In the article "Marketing intangible products and product intangibles," Levitt (1981), opined that tangibilizing the intangible to engage the target audience is understandably complex. However, the buyer decision-making process for the service product compounds marketing challenges. The author of this article tried to provide a theoretical framework which described the integration of atmosphere with service marketing as well as the role of atmosphere pertaining to the consumer decision-making process. Misra Suddhendu Narayan and Kumar Sadual Sapan (2008) define rural tourism, as an activity that takes place in the countryside. It's multifarious and should entail farm/agricultural business enterprise, cultural, nature adventure and eco-

tourism. As against typical tourism enterprise, a rural tourism enterprise has typical characteristics; it's experience-oriented; the location area is usually less inhabited, it's preponderantly in natural environments and it supports the preservation of culture, heritage, and traditions especially locally. As per Meena (2015), the notion of rural tourism is to benefit the local community through entrepreneurial and employment opportunities, generation of income, conservation and development of handicrafts and preservation of the environment and heritage. Rural tourism will bring people of different lifestyles, cultures, and beliefs closer to one another and help in providing a wider outlook on life. Apart from the above-mentioned benefits, it will also help in developing social, cultural, and educational values. Sharpley and Vass (2006) emphasize that rural tourism exists in some form or the other. In various tourist destinations, the main centres of attraction are located in rural areas; some of them are mountains, lakes, national parks, cultural sites, and others. Apart from these tourist spots, this sort of tourism can also be extended to experiencing actual rural lifestyles and locals of the area may readily welcome tourists into their lives. Rural tourism has emerged as an important means of addressing the complex socio-economic challenges of rural communities following the decline of the traditional agricultural economy.

India is a multi-destination country with diverse tourist attractions and services. India's rich spiritual and cultural history has created distinguishing architectural styles, temple towns, and world-famous monuments. With the Himalayas as the backdrop, India's mountain hideaways offer some of the best places in the world to literally chill out and revitalize the body and soul. Rural Tourism is developing as one of the best options available with its proven results in the West, to promote incredible India both for local and foreign tourists. Rural India has much to offer to the world. Rich in traditions of arts, crafts, and culture, rural India can emerge as an important tourist spots. The current estimated market for rural tourism in India is around Rs.4, 300 crores per annum. It has the potential to appeal to both foreign and local tourists. Rural tourism projects in India have 310 million domestic tourist potentialities. The concept of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' is more openly practised in rural India in comparison to urban India (Rama Kumar and Shinde 2008, 443). Karanwal and Dabral (2014) imply that the pressure of urban lifestyles has given birth to counter-urbanization syndrome. People living in urban areas are worn out because of the hustle and bustle of the cities and are willing to try a rural lifestyle. This has led to rising interest in rural life. There are other factors, which are responsible for the shift towards rural tourism such as the increasing levels of awareness, growing interest in heritage and culture, improved accessibility, and environmental consciousness amongst urban dwellers.

3. Research Aims and Objectives

The tourist is the key component of the process under investigation. Its existence in the neighbourhood influences other factors and determines the viability of the tourist destination. Therefore, the local public authorities can decide how to effectively manage the tourism patrimony in order to increase the competitiveness of the suggested tourist destination by analysing its attitude and perspective towards the tourism phenomena in a particular region.

Analysing how locals and visitors view the tourism phenomena is an effective way to assess its value and potential for sustainable growth. This topic is frequently covered in the literature in theoretical or empirical studies that either concentrate on the socio-cultural and economic effects that this phenomenon has on local communities (Dogan 1989, 216; Wall and Mathieson 2006) or the effects that this phenomenon has on the environment, particularly on protected areas (Priskin 2003, 189; Szell, 2012). Other approaches address the relationships between actors involved in the tourism process (Lankford and Howard 1994, 121; Presenza *et al.* 2012, 14), and particular studies aim to compare the opinions of different groups of residents (Andriotis and Vaughan 2003, 172). Although the Charu and Rohandih Villages in the Ormanjhi Block of Jharkhand have a wealth of tourism potential, the presence of a great tourist heritage does not guarantee the emergence of a successful and long-lasting tourism industry. Positive economic and social effects may result from the active and coordinated involvement of the destination's stakeholders (locals, visitors, public and private institutions, NGOs), who will produce viable, adaptable tourism products that are perfectly anchored in the local reality. The research area serves as a conclusive case study for the issues raised in this context. The main objectives of this study are to assess the possible effects of rural tourism on host-guest interactions in the study area, should it become a popular tourist destination. The article also makes an effort to capture tourists' and locals' perspectives in order to explore potential obstacles and opportunities in promoting Toti Jharna as a tourism destination.

4. Methodological Aspects

The research was conducted in accordance with the study's theme, which is qualitative in nature. The primary goal of the research is to determine the scope of rural tourism in the study area. In 2022, a basic survey was conducted using pre-tested schedules based on Neil Leiper's Whole Tourism System Model (1979). It was created to find out what respondents thought about the scope of rural tourism and ethno-tourism in

the study area. Interviewees were asked open-ended questions while still in the field (face to face), and the researcher attempted to administer the fieldwork survey using the focus group discussion, personal interview, case study, and photography methods. A convenient sampling method was used to select survey participants.

The research has been carried out in different phases. The initial period of research proved to be difficult because of the uneven terrain and suspicious attitude of the respondents that gives the impression of a culture whose members constitute what Adler and Adler (2002) described as reluctant respondents who are not only hard to find but even harder to secure for permission to study. However, employing a 'local boy' as a field guide helps overcome this predicament. The 'local boy' plays the role of passive translator rather than engaging directly in the interview process. Key informant interviews, Jungle walks (for spot identification), census schedules, observation schedules and attraction identification were the key methods, tools and techniques for collecting primary data. Moreover, prior to the 'real' fieldwork, a few informal meetings and interviews were carried out with some key people and potential key informants in the block and village to explore more baseline information regarding the study. The data on local perception were collected through open-ended interviews and guided observation by the field guide. Almost every member of the village male, female, adult and young were interviewed independently to find the shared and distributed knowledge concerning destination development and management. The study was principally guided by qualitative methodology and data validation was based on focused group discussion and peer group meeting.

5. Toti Jharna's (Water-Fall) Tourist Importance: An Overview

The 'Toti Jharna' Waterfall is located in the village of Rohandih. This village is located in Ranchi's Ormajhi block, and its town is Sikidiri. This village, however, falls under the jurisdiction of the Sikidiri Police Station in the Ranchi district. Half of the Sikidiri area is in the Angada block, and the other half is in the Ranchi district's Ormanjhi block. The village is about two kilometres from the main motorway and NH 33, which connects Ranchi and Bokaro via Gola and Sikidiri. In the village panchayat administration, Charu Panchayat covers this village. Rohandih is a small village/hamlet in the Ranchi District of the Indian state of Jharkhand. Rohandih is 27 kilometres from the state capital Ranchi and is surrounded by the Ramgarh block to the east, Angara block to the south, Kanke block to the north, and Patratu block to the west.

Toti Jharna waterfall is approximately two kilometres from the village. From the village to the main motorway NH33, there is a single-lane pucca roadway. The waterfall

is divided into two sections. The first is the simple basic origin (small plain fall), and the second is the large waterfall from above. The first part of the word 'Jharna,' which means waterfall, is considered a pious and sacred location because of its mythological history and mystery. The second part is a large waterfall for enjoyment and a peaceful feeling in the lap of nature. According to the villagers, the first section is known as *Hathua Dah*, which means the place where water current flows and falls below the ground. The second part is *Bhadwa Gadha* which means a huge height from which water runs down from a 120-foot approx. during the rainy season. Its third section is known as *Tiring Nichin Pahad*, which means a small mountain spread around a waterfall with dense greenery forest and various faunas such as monkeys and birds. The interesting fact is that *Mangardaha* is located above and beside this *pahad* (hill), which was primarily designed for crocodile domestication; its water current also flows down with heavy flow from the *pahad*, forming a river known as *Bhairvi Nadi*, which means wide river. A dam was built about 2-3 kilometres away from this wide river. This river (Bhairvi) flows to the famous religious site of Rajrappa, where the popular temple of *Maa Chhinmastike* is located, which is very popular among Hindus. This river runs beside this holy temple.

According to the people of this village, the first and upper part of the Jharna, which means the origin part, has religious and ritualistic beliefs that people come here for *Mundan Kriya* (Head Tonsuring). Because they consider that this water takes the form of a river and mixes (meets) with the 'Rajrappa' temple, and thus fulfilling wishes in 'Rajrappa' is the same as fulfilling wishes here. As a result, people come here to fulfil their desires by sacrificing hens, goats, and sheep to their respective lords or 'Kuldevta' (descent god-goddess). Aside from its religious significance, this location is a must-see for both tourists and villagers. The *Jharna* is located in the midst of nature, surrounded by beautiful scenery and green forested small mountains. Tourists come here to sacrifice their various faunas in order to fulfil their desires and to enjoy the beautiful scenic view of the waterfall and dense green forests. *Toti Jharna* is the main attraction for tourists because of its amazing natural beauty and peaceful environment with its whispering voice. Tourists are seen in large numbers here from January onwards. However, on average, 20-50 tourists visit this location per day.

During discussions with some villagers, it was discovered that people planned to build a 'Lord Shiva Temple' just behind the origin of the *Jharna*, where water flows in two directions in the upper part of the *Jharna*. However, due to the pandemic, this work could not be completed, and the temple is scheduled to be built there between September and October 2023. In the year 2023, on the occasion of 'Makar Sankranti,'

a grand fair festival was held. However, the decision to hold the grand fair on the occasion of 'Mahashivratri' has already been made on behalf of the villagers and their committees.

Another villager told the mythological story that solidified the villagers' belief in this auspicious location. According to Shibu Mahto (50), the village experienced a terrible famine. Because of the lack of rain, the people of this village were depressed and in trouble. They intended to perform an 'Akhand Path,' which entails continuous or monolithic chanting of the respective god or goddess with a monolithic lamp (24 hours burning of earthen lamp). They took water from the *Toti Jharna's* origin (two-way water sources) and finished their worship with it. Doing this monolithic chanting with this water yielded unprecedented results within two hours, and it rained heavily for the next five hours. People were overjoyed as a result of God's miracle, and they also began their agricultural work. This is the 2009 incident. Since that day, the villagers regard that location as pious and sacred. The villagers found inner peace and fulfilment. Since then, no famine has occurred. Following this occurrence, the villagers formed a committee and decided to construct a temple in that location. According to the villagers, tourists come here in greater numbers during the winter season. They primarily come here to picnic. However, on January 1st, 2022, approximately 500 people arrived. In total, 2500-3000 people have been seen visiting here in January. After the Rajrappa temple, the villagers must consider this location as the second Rajrappa.

6. Development Potential of Toti Jharna: Host and Guest Perception

Recently, academics around the world have attempted to research the perceptions of local communities and tourists towards tourism, as well as their impact on the tourism industry. Despite an increase in the number of studies focusing on local residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism in general and its impacts (Wall and Mathieson 2006, 392-401), the results remain inconclusive. Local residents' support for tourism development is required to ensure the industry's commercial, socioeconomic, cultural, physiological, and political sustainability. The socio-economic status of the community's residents may influence the structural changes within the tourism industry occurring as a result of the ongoing development of rural tourism such as changes in the local economics (e.g., Manyara and Jones 2007, 628 Simpson 2008, 1), social changes (e.g., Bull and Lovell 2007, 229; Simpson 2008, 1), cultural changes (e.g., Lee, Kang, Long, and Reisinger, 2010, 189; Nyaupane, Morais and Dowler, 2006, 1373), and environmental changes (e.g., Dyer, Gursoy, Sharma, and Carter 2007, 409; Lee *et al.*, 2010, 409; Simpson, 2008: 1). The local residents of tourist

destinations have a perception that tourism activity is an economic development tool (Gursoy *et al.*, 2002, 79). Murphy (1985) found that residents' perception is affected by economic dependence, the significance of the area and resident-tourist interaction. The perceptions of socio-cultural impacts on one specific site were inspected by Brunt and Courtney (1999) and Gu and Wong (2006) and they found that the residents had a positive perception of the tourist movement.

On the other hand, few researchers found a negative perception of local residents towards tourism (Allen *et al.*, 1993, 27). More specifically, research has shown that greater length of residency in the community (Liu and Var, 1986, 193; Madrigal 1993, 336; Pizam 1978, 314; Um and Crompton 1987, 27), heavy tourism concentration (Madrigal 1993; Pizam 1978), and native-born status (Canan and Hennessy 1989, 227; Davis, Allen and Cosenza 1988, 2; Um and Crompton 1987, 27) are the main reasons for negative perception of tourism. Smith and Kranninch (1998) studied the negative relationship between perceptions of tourism with tourism destination development. High tourist movement in the area produces displeasure among residents and it has a relationship with transportation problems, corruption, and price rise (Pearce, 1980). Heavy tourist inflow to the region has a relationship of perception with traditional culture loss (Perez and Nadal 2005, 925).

Similarly, tourist perceptions are critical for developing new visions that can sustainably increase tourist numbers. It is critical to assess how people perceive a destination's social and physical environment in order to improve the tourism industry (Petrosillo *et al.*, 2006). Tourists are notoriously demanding, with complex, multi-layered desires and needs. Today's "postmodern tourists" have specific needs and objectives. As a result, both the government and the private sector must provide favourable facilities for tourists to meet their needs. The support of residents and their attitudes affect tourism sustainability (Cina and Botha 2004, 213). Tourists develop their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the vacation based on their attitudes and perceptions (Gnanapala 2015, 7). Tourist perceptions are not homogeneous and are dependent on individual preferences and values (Hall, 2005; Richardson and Loomis, 2005, 44-60), (De Freitas, Christopher & Higham, J. 2005, 29-43; Gilg *et al.*, 2005, 481), (Gössling, S and Hall, CM. 2006, 163; Gössling, S., Scott, D., Hall, CM., Ceron, JP, and Du-Bois, G. 2012, 36).

The goal of this study is to contribute to the literature on resident perceptions and tourist attractiveness. It creates a framework to investigate the role of context in determining the significance of tourist and resident attributes and their contribution to attractiveness. In the current context, there is no research on tourist perceptions of

destination image and how the image influences specific destinations. Furthermore, the study area is remote, and no previous research on this topic has been conducted. As a result, this study will help to fill a research gap and provide results for stakeholders and planners looking to improve the area's tourism infrastructure to attract more visitors. This study will serve as a model for planners, hoteliers, and other stakeholders interested in improving the tourism environment by strengthening infrastructure and closing critical gaps.

This study used a sample of twenty-five local residents and ten tourists from the study area to map the residents' and tourists' perceptions of the positive and negative impact of this off-beat rural destination in Jharkhand. For convenience and to protect the respondents' anonymity, we have labelled the local respondents as L followed by a numeral, i.e., L1, L2. Similarly, tourists are labelled as T1, T2, etc. The study's findings are indicative and suggest various perspectives on rural tourism development. Locals agree that tourism can bring both positive and negative aspects to a community. It's worth noting that the majority of respondents expressed reservations about the government's role in the area's planning and development strategies. Because of the primary benefits, tourism was viewed as a development opportunity for the host community (e.g., recreational areas, job opportunities, and the living standard of the residents). These findings support previous research that tourism development leads to environmental (natural and cultural) protection and an increase in job opportunities. These are critical aspects for the development of sustainable tourism in rural areas. The development of tourism activity in rural areas generates additional revenue for the local budget, which can be invested in future tourism development plans and the conservation of tourism attractions, ensuring the area's sustainability. Based on the interviews that captured local perceptions, the results are presented below through thematic analysis.

6.1. Positive and Negative Aspects of Tourism

In general, research participants appreciated the positive impacts that can be brought to an area from tourism. Each interviewee summarised the impact of tourism in their area using expressions like 'diverse income opportunities' (L11), 'gave motivation to young people to stay in the village' (L2), and 'better infrastructure' (L8). The following excerpt demonstrates that the villagers are willing to accept any type of development intervention that does not jeopardise their ethno-ecological heritage.

“... of course, yes. Our region's development is inextricably linked to its social and environmental characteristics. For example, we observe our traditional rituals such as Karma, and Sarhul, in the same way that our forefathers did” (L6).

Tourism is perceived as a positive enterprise in rural areas and has a multiplier effect (Rasoolimanesh 2015, 335). Locals appreciate the fact that their village is attractive to outsiders because of the various elements that make it unique. L12 mentioned that: “Tourism development can help to repair dilapidated roads, restore temples, and improve drinking water supply.... some rest houses may be built to attract outsiders for farm tourism experiences...Transportation will also be improved”.

Tourism, according to L21, is one of the reasons why many villagers may stay in the village even during the non-agricultural season due to the income opportunities that tourism can provide for young people. Respondents were eloquent in mentioning that there are also negative consequences because development is not always aligned with village life.

“I recently learned that a national highway will be built through my neighbourhood. I hope it does not destroy local businesses, homes, or sacred groves. It may help to reach the local attraction of our village to global tourists in one way, but it also risks becoming too commercial and losing the local identity” (L21).

Furthermore, some respondents expressed concern that if all villagers became reliant on tourism services as a means of earning a living, we risk losing our traditional way of life, which is inextricably linked to our agricultural operations. In addition, the seasonal cycle of tourist footfall is an important consideration when developing an occupational diversification strategy. Locals have realised that they must diversify their occupational activities by combining traditional practices and finding new revenue streams. This is especially true after the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented any tourism to the various prominent tourist spots located near the *Toti Jharna* region. A respondent (L21) stated, “ I believe that much planning is required to promote our village as an ethno-ecotourism destination. It is dangerous when locals rely entirely on tourism”.

This is an issue for many destinations with seasonal tourist cycles (Rua, 2020). As a result, the authorities should prioritise plans and policies that enable the diversification of tourism activities and generate year-round demand. The government’s role appears to be weaker as a result of its inability to impose development strategies and incentives that can offset negative effects with positive ones.

During the field trip, researchers interacted with a few visitors, most of whom were from the same district and a few from other districts throughout the state. Visitors from outside may struggle to find the location because it is not yet well-known and lacks any kind of signage. Various perspectives from visitors emerged during the interaction, which may shed some light on both positive and negative aspects of that destination.

Excerpts from one of the visitors (T1) from outside the districts, “.....Because of its location and consistent flow of water throughout the year, this location has the potential to become one of the district’s most popular waterfall destinations. However, significant improvements in basic tourist amenities are required”. Another visitor (T5) mentioned that the lack of proper signage makes it difficult for the majority of visitors to find the location and raises concerns about security because it is not yet on the Jharkhand Tourism Department’s tourist map. (T5) “I’m nervous about going to that location. Only villagers are available to inquire about the location. If something goes wrong with my car.....I’ll be in no man’s land, looking for assistance!”

Although both the host and the guest agree that the area has a high tourism potential, they did not ignore the negative aspects of destination development. This explains why, despite the potential for self-sustained development, residents in most villages with tourism potential lack a clear tourist culture, leading them to see tourism as a development sector. In general, while visitors recognize the territory’s potential, their focus on each destination is more personal.

6.2. Threats and Opportunities

The main threats stem from the negative impact of unplanned or unauthorized development in the areas. Respondents primarily mentioned “waste pollution” or “a lack of coordinated development actions.” Furthermore, there have been reports of tourists harassing locals while visiting and organising picnics in the village area. The following quote provides an example of a threat to tourism:

L6 stated that “local teenagers came here with their girlfriends and engaged in some heinous behaviour. They also consume alcohol and discard the glass bottles in the nearby bushes”

T7 narrates “You cannot visit this place with your family. The waterfall is deep within the forest, and there is no clear path to the viewpoint. There is also the threat of wild monkeys, snakes, and other animals”

The preceding narratives raise concerns about the habits of tourists who visit rural areas. What is required is that visitors to rural areas respect the surrounding pristine environments as well as the residents’ peaceful lives. In the case of opportunities arising from tourism, hosts eloquently argued that there are many financial and social benefits. L3 states: “I truly believe that tourism can bring family members together, especially when it comes to a family business. Women members can work in small businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores, selling fruits and handicrafts, and so on”.

Another excerpt from the visitor (T2) is worth mentioning, “I’d never been to such a pristine and serene natural setting. It requires safeguards against overexploitation and commercialization. With proper planning, villagers can be used as tourist guides for trekking through the forest to reach the viewpoint”.

However, there has been dissatisfaction with the government authorities’ focus on developing specific villages. Locals believe that there is discrimination in tourism development and that areas’ full potential has not been realised. Tourism has been identified as a good development strategy for rural areas in Jharkhand, but development has been slow for the off-the-beaten-path destination. Perhaps this is because the development of the neighbouring popular destination did not allow for the growth of the off-beat destination. The authorities may not have enough resources as well. However, the Jharkhand government’s pursuit of sustainable tourism should result in holistic development, which can improve the area by realising all of its potential and ensuring social and economic viability.

6.3. Changes in Attitude, Lifestyle and Eating Behavior

Undoubtedly, tourism activity can introduce new habits to an area (Vidal Rua 2020, 165). Interview results are indicative, and provide an insight into local perceptions in relation to new habits, lifestyles, and attitudes. L15 said, “Tourism activities in my locality have changed my mindset, but not my lifestyle. I catch myself being more open to the outsiders, and appreciate and respect the differences of every person”.

Interacting with other cultures influences people’s acceptance and appreciation and contributes to mutual understanding. The main argument concerning eating habits is that locals discovered and have explored gastronomy and cuisine by serving traditional dishes to outsiders in a *dehati* (local) way. One of the respondents (L3) mentioned that “... youth groups always demand *desi murga* (a local breed of chicken) prepared with the skin during the picnic. We used all homemade ingredients to prepare the dishes and served them on a *Sal* plate. Sometimes, visitors also ask for locally brewed liquor (*handia* and *mahua*)”. The Response of T1 is also worth mentioning, “The best way to enjoy *Toti Jharna’s* serenity is with Desi chicken and handia. I used to come here with a friend just for that.”

Exploring food traditions through the presentation of dishes made with local ingredients gives the location identity, and residents can become more connected to their cultural roots and traditions. Visitors seek out traditional gastronomy and cuisine to learn more about the area. Another important aspect is that food culture and local spirits culture can be combined, especially with proper planning, to replace the anarchy caused by consuming foreign liquor by the visitors.

6.4. *Cultural Revival*

Cultural elements in tourism have a variety of benefits for destinations (Liasidou 2018, 1). Cultural characteristics are being regenerated, as evidenced by traditional cuisine, food, festivals, and handicrafts. According to an articulate respondent (L22) “we intend to hold an annual *tusu* fair near the waterfall area to promote the area to outsiders. Such gatherings also allow the villagers to showcase their cultural performances in front of strangers”. Another respondent replied (L12) that “through traditional food, dances, songs, we can demonstrate our culture, our hospitality, our own identity”. The excerpt is also indicative (L11) “Many people, including tourists, researchers, and students, are interested in learning about our religion, traditions, cuisine, and daily lives. As a result, they come to our area to expand their knowledge and have a one-of-a-kind experience with our cultural heritage. At the same time, we are learning from this experience and attempting to learn even more and find useful information to share with them, going above and beyond to demonstrate the warm hospitality that is part of our cultural heritage”.

Thus, cultural revival and pride are concerned with ‘image,’ ‘identity,’ and the exchange of knowledge through cultural demonstration. Cultural pride is synonymous with the pride of locals who share a sense of belonging. A visitor (T10) suggests “villagers can exhibit their traditional artefacts by building a community museum. This will attract visitors while also educating them about the local culture”.

The above narration suggests that involvement in tourism benefits the locals because they are consequently motivated to present and promote their cultural heritage. Sustainability is indeed a way of displaying the unique characteristics of a place.

6.5. *Government Support*

Respondents argued that rural areas are part of tourism development in the case of the government’s role. During discussions with the villagers, it appears that the villagers have some demands to develop this hidden tourist destination through beautification while preserving the natural and cultural landscape. They want the area to be beautified, with a park, ropeways leading down to the waterfall, a tourist amenity centre, and other basic amenities. However, the main demand is that the government include this location on the Ranchi district’s official tourist map. They also suggested that the *Toti Jharna* be promoted as part of a local tourist circuit that also included Hundru Fall and Getalsud Dam. A respondent (L4) highlighted that “if properly developed, a tourist could visit Hundru Fall, Getalsud Dam, and Toti Jharna all at once. All

three are close to one another”. Another respondent (L6) said “The PRI and assembly representatives have been very proactive in bringing this location to the forefront. Jharkhand’s administration is also doing a good job of promoting rural tourism. To develop this location, we will need to work together”. We met one person (T2) who lives permanently in Bihar and visited that location with local relatives and suggested that, “ the view is truly breath-taking, and the YouTube Vlogger should document the location so that government agencies are aware of it”.

Local governments in rural areas can play an important role in encouraging tourism development as apparent from the statement by L22, “I used to believe that this village had nothing to offer and that the investment opportunities were minor. But now I realise how wrong I was. The village’s tourism potential emerged during the Covid-19 lockdown when local boys began exploring the area in their spare time. Our Mukhiya (Village Head) has a vision for the village’s growth while also preserving its unique character and identity”. Additionally, indicative quotes include statements like L19, “...the government needs to invest in road infrastructure to make our village accessible”. Also, L14 said, “need to construct the entrance mentioning the place name and appointment of *Paryatak mitra* to facilitate tourist need”.

Locals are preparing to approach the administration in order for them to listen to their concerns and establish a network of rural localities as popular tourist destinations with year-round activities. The unique natural and social environment, as well as the rich historical and religious heritage, should be promoted. Education is essential for encouraging locals to enter the industry and learn about the benefits. The development of stronger collaboration networks will enable rural residents to pursue sustainable goals. Any government plan will fail unless locals participate (Šegota, Tina., Mihalic, Tanja., and Kuščer, Kir. 2017, 196).

7. Host Initiatives to Promote Toti Jharna as a Tourist Destination

Rural tourism development is more than just a homestay programme; it is also a rural development strategy. However, implementation necessitates a high level of commitment and understanding among stakeholders. A concerted effort, without relying on outsiders’ assistance, is required to design a successful rural destination, particularly in village tourist destination programmes. The development of Rohandih as a tourist village may provide enormous opportunities to rural communities. This could provide additional support for rural socioeconomic development, social capital development, conservation and enhancement of rural areas, and security issues in general. In order to develop the tourism sector in a rural destination, the local community must

be involved in the tourism development programme. The debate on rural tourism through the discussion between rural studies and tourism studies to understand the socioeconomic changes associated with rural areas through community-based tourism is mainly based on the conversion of heritage attributes and territorial specificities into commodities available for consumption in the tourism sector (Daniel De Jesús Contreras and F. Xavier Medina, 2021, 416). It is believed that the programme will not achieve its goals unless the community in the rural destination develops. Nature-based tourism and cultural tourism are two types of rural tourism products. The village tourist destination is the result of the combination of two products.

As one of the villages in Ranchi District, Rohandih Village has the potential to become one of the tourist villages in the Ormanjhi block. Despite the fact that the village only recently gained prominence as a tourist destination, tourist traffic remains very low. Tourism impacts are substantial for the few people who directly benefit, but most residents have not benefited much from tourism development due to a lack of capital, business skills and connections (Li Yang, 2015, 343). There is no mechanism in place to count tourist footfall in order to develop an organised plan for developing this location as a tourist destination. However, locals reported only a few figures about the average number of daily visitors per day and their purpose of visit in various months. In January, a village fair (*Tusu*) near the waterfall area attracts a large number of visitors, including local and state dignitaries.

Table 1: Average monthly visitors at Toti Jharna

Sl. No.	Month	Average Tourist Per Day (No.)	Purposels
1	March to June	30 to 40	Leisure
2	July to October	40-50	Picnic, Leisure and Worship
3	November to February	200-300	Picnic, Recreation, Worship

Source: The researcher collected data from the field with local residents and visitors during the year 2021 to 2022.

Table 1 shows the average number of tourists who visit each month and their main reason for visiting. Tourists visit that location for leisure during the summer season because of the perennial flow of water and its location in the midst of the forest. People visit during the monsoon and winter seasons for both religious and recreational reasons. During the winter months, most people visit for picnics or religious observances. There were a few temporary shops set up by villagers selling groceries, snacks, water, and local fruits. In this context, the visitor's composition is also important. During the winter, a

family or a group of males, females, and children can be found, whereas, in the summer, a boy's group can be found primarily in the afternoon. Based on this rudimentary information, locals have classified the village's potential as a tourist destination into three categories and prepared an operational guideline to protect the community and promote rural tourism in their area. The three potentials are Natural potential (Waterfall, forest trail and hilly landscape), Spiritual Potential (Sacred water, Mythological importance, and Worship) and Institutional Potential (Local community, Local wisdom and Local performances). During a focused group discussion with the villagers, it was discovered that they had already agreed on certain points to manage and develop their village as a tourist destination through *Gram Sabha* (Village committee) meetings. The following are the proposed steps that all of the villagers agreed to carry out:

- (i) **Temple Construction:** Because this location has mythological significance, people from the village and neighbouring villages travel there to perform various rituals and wish fulfilment activities, but there is no permanent location to hold those performances. Littering is a common occurrence following performances. Villagers decided to build a temple to Lord Shiva and *Maa Bhagavati* there in order to better serve visitors and manage the area. The villagers also believe that the location has the same spiritual significance as Rajrappa (a famous temple in Ramgarh district, Jharkhand) which is located at the confluence of the Damodar and Bhairavi rivers. Villagers believe that *Toti Jharna* is the source of the *Bhairavi* River. Temple construction also makes it easier to organize various fairs and festivals, which attract visitors in all seasons.
- (ii) **Follow-up meetings:** During the weekly *gram sabha*, villagers decided to create a separate agenda for discussing tourism activities in the village. The discussion will centre on innovative ideas for popularizing tourism activities, the development of tourist facilities, visitor demand, sensitizing locals, inviting VIP guests to attract media attention, and so on. They also intend to organize a group of male and female volunteers to greet the special guests in a traditional manner during their visit to the Toti Jharna. A nominal subscription fee will be collected from the villagers, and donations from visitors may be requested for the development of tourist amenities in the area. Everything will be decided at the weekly follow-up meetings.
- (iii) **Surveillance Activities:** Because the location is in a remote area, outsiders are often hesitant to visit. To ensure the safety of the tourists, a village surveillance committee will be formed. Furthermore, the behaviours of young couples involved in vulgar activities will be closely monitored. During

the peak season, every interested villager will be given an equal chance to open a temporary shop. If any of the tourists are found to be engaging in illegal activities, he or she will be turned over to the local police station.

- (iv) **Increased Accessibility:** Everything will change if the destination becomes accessible to all types of tourists all year. The gram sabha decided to put an entrance door near NH 33 that mentioned the 'Toti Jharna' and its distance from the entrance. If possible, the entrance gate should be folded with beautiful photographs of the spot of attraction that will attract tourists who are unfamiliar with the location. Stairways leading to the waterfall must be built from the parking area. For those seeking adventure, an alternate path to the waterfall via a forest trail will be prepared. A few professional YouTube vloggers will be contacted for videography of the area, which may help reach a rural tourism audience.

The potential for tourism development in Rohandih village is vast. The high tourism potential of Rohandih Village has piqued the interest of the city dwellers. The growing desire of the people of Rohandih Village to develop its tourism potential has undoubtedly become a major capital for the implementation of community-based tourism and added energy to village tourism efforts. Existing products must be strengthened in terms of innovation and technology. Community products must be innovative, especially then that Rohandih Village will be designated as a tourist village. The general public must be educated not only on how to make but also on how to present products that meet tourism service standards. This is significant because, as we discovered during our village stay, the potential for community involvement in tourism management is very high. Community participation will not only produce products (food, drinks, and accessories) but will also teach people how to present tourism-standard products. According to the above description, the Rohandih tourism village planning approach necessitates the involvement of various decision-makers in the tourism planning process so that the community can identify the various impacts of tourism and then formulate strategies and programmes to optimise the positive impacts and minimise the negative impacts caused by the development of tourism destinations.

8. Concluding Remarks

The Rohandih villagers see tourism as a significant development opportunity for the rural community, and they employ a variety of tactics to promote it, despite the fact that their efforts are still in their infancy and small in comparison to the potential of the area. This study looked into how tourists and locals in a Jharkhand hamlet perceived the

industry. To conceptualise and comprehend local sentiments towards tourism, the study used semi-structured interviews with residents. However, they expressed concerns about the official government authorities, who they believe should implement more effective policies and plans. Locals view tourism as a positive trend in their communities. In terms of development, there are differences among rural areas. This is because there isn't a comprehensive development strategy that can incorporate and inspire all communities. Locals contend that tourism has all the elements necessary for rural communities to grow and can help residents economically and financially. The study's findings demonstrate that residents of the rural destination have a favourable opinion of tourism, which they anticipate would benefit both the region's tourist providers and the region as a whole. As a result, if tourism providers from rural areas continue to develop their offers based on the aforementioned expectations of the target population, it has the potential to become an essential source of sustainable development.

The locals are aware of the potential effects that tourism may have on their neighbourhood, and they particularly value the good ones, such as the enhancement of recreational activities and the growth of the neighbourhood by raising the standard of living and quality of life. To be sustainable and draw both local and foreign tourists, the growth of tourism in rural areas needs strategic plans that take into account the history, the cultural traits, and the competitive advantages of the region. In addition to developing special training programmes to qualify the workforce in tourism services and ensure high standard quality services, special training programmes should be developed to qualify the working force in rural tourism services in order to improve perception about the quality of those services. The research highlights important aspects related to the perception of the residents and visitors. The interactions between visitors and locals have a big impact on how sustainably tourism develops in a place. Residents' impressions of the growth of tourism and their acceptance and tolerance of tourists are influenced by the quality of interactions between residents and visitors. Given the potential to promote religious heritage, culture, and cuisine, rural planning and development are essential to establishing a network involving all villagers as part of tourism.

The determinants and explanations for the attitudes and perceptions of the village's rural residents towards the development of tourism were explored in this study. The research's findings offer useful and significant information on their support for the growth of tourism and their future intentions to enter the tourism industry. Policymakers and tourism strategies can use this data to create plans for the development of rural tourism that is sustainable. In order to determine the support and attitude of the local community towards tourism development, on the one hand, and to evaluate

the satisfaction level of the tourists, on the other, future research should be expanded to similar rural regions with tourism potential. It's crucial to examine the demand for rural tourism in order to create effective and sustainable plans. When creating appropriate tourism services and products, can offer crucial information about the sociodemographic traits of the visitors, their preferences, and trip budget. Finally, only a comprehensive approach to development and the participation of locals, visitors, and the government through a powerful collaborative network will enable sustainability goals to be achieved.

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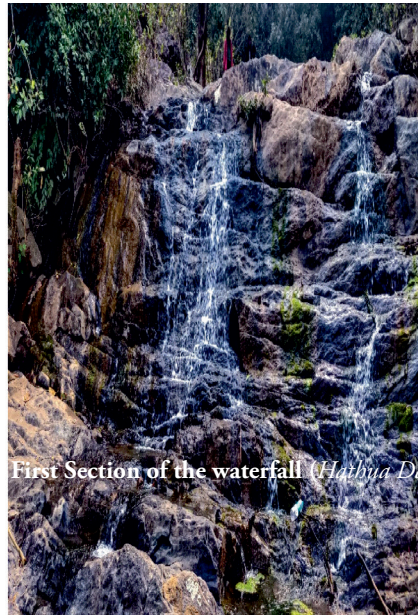


Images of Toti Jharna (Waterfall), (Source: Fieldwork 2022)



Hilly landscape around Toti Jharna

Source of Bhairavi river



First Section of the waterfall (Hathua Da)

Second Section of the waterfall
(Bhadwa Gadha)