



Tourism as a catalyst for rural economic transformation: A study of Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu

Amutha D.

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli – 627012, Tamil Nadu, India.

*Corresponding author. Email: amuthajoe@gmail.com.

Rural tourism has emerged as a vital driver for economic growth and sustainable development in India. This research, titled “Tourism as a Catalyst for Rural Economic Transformation: A Study of Thoothukudi District, Tamil Nadu”, investigates the role of tourism in shaping the economic landscape of rural households in Thoothukudi. The study aims to evaluate the current status of rural tourism, explore tourist demographics, identify reasons for visiting, and measure the economic benefits for local communities. A total of 140 tourists were surveyed using structured questionnaires, and the collected data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, chi-square tests, factor analysis, and multiple regression. Results indicate that middle-aged, higher-income tourists, mainly visiting for religious or leisure purposes, significantly boost the rural economy. Factor analysis revealed two principal dimensions of tourism impact: Economic Impact (income generation, employment creation, entrepreneurship) and Socio-Cultural Impact (infrastructure improvement, cultural promotion). Multiple regression results show that age, income, occupation, and purpose of visit together account for 61% of the variance in economic impact. The study concludes that rural tourism plays a crucial role in enhancing income, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurship in Thoothukudi’s villages. These findings offer practical insights for policymakers, local communities, and entrepreneurs to foster sustainable and inclusive rural tourism development.

Keywords: rural tourism, economic impact, tourism development, factor analysis, multiple regression.
