# Reena Mehta College of Commerce and Management Studies

Department of Commerce and Management
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Organizes

One Day National Conference

# Urban & Rural Development: Challenges & Opportunities (An Interdisciplinary Approach)

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# Role of Tourism in Rural Development

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#### Introduction

Tourism has been considered as a major social phenomenon of the societies all along and India is no exception. It is an indispensible sector for the economic development of the country. It is a low capital, labour intensive industry. It's having an economic multiplier effect. It has all the potential to stimulate other sectors through its forward & backward linkages with sectors like agriculture, horticulture, poultry, handicrafts, construction & many more. Tourism has emerged as one of the world's largest service industry with sizable economic advantages. The tourism is spontaneously contributing to improve Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generation of employments across the world. The World Travel and Tourism Council) estimates that the travel and tourism sector now accounts for 9.9% of global GDP (World Economic Forum 2008). In addition world tourism is world's largest employer, generating 231 million jobs or nearly one out of every 12 jobs globally (WTTC, 2009). This booming tourism industry is emerging an important driver of growth and development.

Rural tourism is currently the focus of attention throughout the world and is being identified as one of the important instruments for the rural development. Planners are using rural tourism which also includes Eco-Tourism and Farm Tourism to increase economic opportunities for the rural community. In India where around 70 % population live in rural areas and are entirely dependent on agriculture, newer opportunities need to be generated. The Rural Tourism presently is on top of the charts of achieving the aim. Rural tourism can be harnessed as a strategy for rural development. The development of a strong base around the concept of rural tourism is definitely useful for a nation like India where almost 70 % of the population resides in the villages. Rural India has much more to offer beyond agriculture. It has a great potential for various segments like eco tourism, adventure tourism, health tourism, farm tourism, nature tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism and like others. According to the studies conducted on the subject shows that there is evidence that in Europe rural tourism has made valuable contributions to rural incomes both at the individual as well as local community level. It has delivered supplementary income and inters-sectoral linkages.

### Concept of Rural tourism

According to Tourism Ministry of India "Any form of tourism that showcases rural life, art, culture and heritage at rural locations, thereby benefiting the local community economically and socially as well as subbling interactions between the tourists and the locals for a more enriching tourism experience, can be