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Volume II



**Entrepreneurship
Development
Institute of India**
Ahmedabad, Gujarat

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Dinesh Awasthi

Dr. Dinesh Awasthi is an Economist with vast experience in entrepreneurship education, research and training. He has worked extensively on policy issues related to SMEs with several multilateral agencies like ILO, UNIDO, UNDP. As a consultant, he has worked on several international assignments. He is widely published with 6 books, 62 papers and 27 reports. His areas of interest are: policy research, cluster development, sub-sector analysis, social entrepreneurship, rural entrepreneurship and NGOs. Dr. Awasthi is a Member of Apex Committees and Core Group of Ministries of MSME, Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, and Department of Science & Technology.

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Mr. Ganapathi Batthini is a Library and Information Science Professional, heading EDI's modern library and information centre. He has 23 years of experience in developing, managing and disseminating information in business management, entrepreneurship, social and engineering sectors. He has authored thirteen research papers for conferences and scholarly journals. He earned M.L.I.Sc. from Annamalai University and has been awarded Gujarat State Level Eligibility Test for Lectureship. He is the Coordinator of the Biennial Conferences.

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Enchanting Eco Tourism Nurtures Tribal Entrepreneurs BJET – Success Model

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Abstract

Irula tribal community's standard living raises due to their conscious social entrepreneurial efforts. Optimal blend of entrepreneurial activities and eco tourism generates income to support 30 tribal families. BJET (Baralikkadu Jungle Eco Tourism) project is a successful model in Coimbatore district. Baralikkadu is a tribal hamlet located at 75 kms from Coimbatore on the bank of Bhavani river that flows into the Pillur dam. The Irula tribals live on the river banks in ten hamlets in the foothills of Nilgiri hills jewelled with lush green forests. The misty air, the green forest, beautiful Bhavani river, hills, bees, butterflies, birds, bison, elephants and other wildlife provide a new mesmerizing experience for new traveller.

The novel idea of using the natural beauty of the place and the tribal coracle riding expertise for introducing jungle eco tourism was materialized by the forest department, Coimbatore during 2007. A research study was conducted during 2012 with the objective of studying the impact of BJET project on the socio-economic development of tribal community there. A sample of 20 coracle drivers and SHG women was considered for the study. Through personal interview schedule data was collected and analysed with relevant tools. The project impact factors were found out. Relevant suggestions were given to tribal eco tourism committees and the forest department. Forest dept. had provided Rs.3,00,000/- assistance for purchase of coracle and its accessories. The eco tourism package consists of two hour coracle ride on the river and lunch by SHG village women trekking and a cool river bath. It is limited to 80 persons per day and available only on weekend days and government holidays. Up to July 31st 2012, 1765 adults and 2017 children (Total 19,692) had visited BJET. Rs.57,00,000 was fetched by tribal committees. It is used to pay Rs.225 labour to coracle driver and Rs.125 per visitor to Baralikkadu women SHG (food) and the rest to socio-economic activities. Rs.7,87,480 was incurred for social and economic development activities of tribal hamlets from the fund generated. The tribal and forest department partnership for tribal livelihood support through social entrepreneurship and eco tourism has kindled hopes in the minds of the tribals of the Western Ghats. The cascading effect of BJET success is amazing.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship; Tribal Entrepreneurship; Eco Tourism; Baralikkadu Jungle Eco Tourism; BJET

Irula tribal community's standard of living raises due to their conscious, social entrepreneurial efforts. Optimal blend of entrepreneurial activities and eco tourism generates income to support 30 tribal families. BJET (Baralikkadu Jungle Eco Tourism) project is a successful model in Coimbatore district. Baralikkadu is a tribal hamlet located at 75 kms from Coimbatore on the bank of Bhavani river that flows into the Pillur dam. The Irula tribals live on the river banks in ten hamlets in the foothills of Nilgiri hills jewelled with lush green forests. The misty air, the green forest, beautiful Bhavani river, hills, bees,

butterflies, birds, bisons, elephants and other wildlife provide a lovely mesmerizing experience for new traveller.

The novel idea of using the natural beauty of the place and the tribal coracle riding expertise for introducing jungle eco tourism was materialized by the forest department, Coimbatore during 2007. For this purpose the forest department formed two eco tourism committees comprising 5 tribal hamlets each. The forest department provided Rs.3 lakh rupees assistance for purchase of a coracle and its accessories. The coracle ride and forest trekking based jungle eco tourism was started from April 2007. Up to July 31, 2012 1765, adults and 2017 children totaling 19692 persons have visited BJET. Revenue of Rs.57 lakhs has been fetched by the tribal committees. The money generated is utilized for payment of labour of Rs.225 to the coracle driver and Rs.125/- per visitor to the Baralikkadu women self help group which serves food to the tourists and also to undertake socio-economic development activities for tribal.

A research study was conducted during 2012 on BJET project. The objectives of the study are

1. To study the impact of BJET Project on the socio-economic development of tribal community.
2. To find out the problems of Irula tribal people and give suggestions.

Methodology

To achieve these objectives, the study centre was selected - Baralikkadu forest tribal village.

A sample of 12 coracle drivers and 12 self help group women were considered for the study. An interview schedule in Tamil language was executed for collection of primary data. The secondary data was collected from the department records, journals and newspapers.

Location, BJET package and the special features are presented here.

Location: It is located at 75 kms from Coimbatore and 85 kms from Ooty. The drive takes about one hour and 45 minutes from Coimbatore city.

Administration

Tribal Eco Tourism Committee of BJET.

Two Irula (ST) Committees were formed during 2007 (681 members).

1. BJET Committee consists of Baralikkadu, Veerakkal, Neeradi Ketthaikadu Korapathy tribal villages.
2. The Poochamarathur BJET committee has Sirukinaru, Thondai, Poochamarathur, Nellimarathur and Sethumadai tribal villages.

The executive committee ETC manages the funds.

Tribal women self help group BJET

Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan

AJSS is working under Avinashilingam Educational Trust Institutions. It is managed by a Board of Management headed by the Chancellor of Avinashilingam Deemed University Sri. TSK. Meenakshi Sundaram Avl., along with other members.

AJSS provides polyvalent education to illiterates, school dropouts and poor both men and women. Skill development courses (125 kinds - need based) are conducted by practical training. Trainees are motivated to start own venture and settle. Full placement is also arranged after training.

Tribal Arts and Crafts - AJSS Training

AJSS gave training to these tribal women on Warli Tribal Arts and Crafts. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd., (TRIFED) an organization under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India has been set up for Economic Development of tribal people (8% of total population) by providing marketing support for their products. 'TRIBES INDIA' is the exclusive shop of tribal artifacts in India showcasing tribals cause. AJSS Markets the tribal art pieces for the tribals. Mrs.S.Suryakala, AJSS Programme Coordinator, Mr.P.Manickam and Mrs.V.Vasuki, Artists render great service to these forest tribals in Karamadai range.

Dr.V.Balasubramaniam, Director, AJSS is a talented, efficient and great administrator has made AJSS the best role model in India.

Mr.Anwardeen, DFO and Mr.Thirunavukkarasu, DFO are doing commendable work in Baralikkadu forest.

Catering and Food Preparation Training - AJSS

Avinashilingam Jan Shikshan Sansthan, Coimbatore had given good training (10 days) in catering and food preparation to supply hygienic and quality tasty food to tourists.

Coracle Rowers of BJET

Twenty local young tribal men were selected based on their coracle rowing skill and trained on safety and rescue measures.

BJET Package

- Tariff - Adult Rs.350/- children Rs.250.
- Activities - 2 hours coracle ride, food, trekking Bhavani river bathing
- Working schedule - Only on Saturdays, Sundays and all public holidays.
- Permitted capacity - 4 numbers per coracle, only 80-100 persons per day.

Special Features

- The scenic landscape of BJET - River, forest with tribal villages in Karamadi range.
- Wild life - Flora and Fauna, Elephants, Bisons, Sambar, Cheetah, Malabar giant squirrel and pied horn bill and many others.
- Time - coracle ride 10 am - 12 am.
- Tribal delicacy food - Ragi balls, fish/vegetable, curry, chappathi and kuruma, variety and curd rice and mineral water.
- Trained self help group women serve good food with hygiene
- Trekking 2kms along Athikadavu river
- Pleasant bath in the Bhavani river

Safety Measures

- Four persons only per coracle
- Two patrol and rescue boats for security
- Quality life jackets
- Demonstration on precautions and emergency steps

Success of BJET

The programme was widely welcomed and appreciated by the visitors. It was recommended by print and visual media. The Eco tourism yielding benefits directly local people is unique.

Table 1: Benefits of BJET - Tourists and Tribals

S.No.	Year	No. of Visitors		Total	Amount Collected
		Adult	Children		
1	2007 - 08	1758	179	1937	4,72,250.00
2	2008 - 09	2003	130	2133	6,26,900.00
3	2009 - 10	3805	475	4280	12,36,500.00
4	2010 - 11	4328	409	4737	12,14,350.00
5	2011 - 12	3560	497	4057	13,36,625.00
6	2012 - 13 (Up to July 2012)	2221	327	2548	8,59,100.00
Total		17675	2017	19692	57,45,725.00

Source: Office Records

Promotion by Forest Department

Table 2: Balance Sheet of BJET (Up to 31.07.2012)

Revenue			Expenditure		
S. No.	Details	Amount	S. No.	Details	Amount
1.	Investment - Received from Tamilnadu Forest Department	3,00,000.00	1.	Coracle and Life Jacket Purchases etc	5,81,132.00
2.	Revenue received from the Tourists	57,45,725.00	2.	Education Grant	45,000.00
3.	Miscellaneous (Membership fees, Bank Interest, etc.,)	25,000.00	3.	Wages paid to the Coracle Drivers	10,83,795.00
			4.	Payment for food etc., through Baralikkadu WSHG	19,80,350.00
			5.	Assistance to Self Help Group	1,00,000.00
			6.	Social and Economic development to tribals of BJET and Expansion of BJET	7,87,483.00
			7.	Documentation Charges	18,500.00
			8.	Gardening and Landscaping	51,400.00
Total		57,70,725.00	Total		46,47,660.00
Balance					11,23,065.00

Source: Office Records

This balance sheet shows the funds available for the development of tribal community.

Alleviating Poverty through BJET

- Wages of Rs.10,83,795 paid to Coracle Rowers and 4,817 man days generated.
- Wages of Rs.19,80,350 paid to the Members of Baralikkadu women Self Help members and 15,843 man days generated

- Rs.7,87,483 incurred for Social and Economic development activities of tribal hamlets from funds generated.

Socio-economic Development of Tribals

- Adult literacy programme in Veerakkal
- Wind mill erected at Veerakkal
- Medical Camp to the tribals
- Kerosene motor issued to Poochamarathur
- Irrigation facility to Veerakkal
- Drip irrigation training to tribals in agricultural university, Coimbatore.
- Training medicinal plants cultivation co-ordinated by AJSS
- Many acres of land - agri-cultivation is taking place-banana and other crops

Forest department authorities 08.03.2009 - Inspection and Review Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF), Chennai, DFO, Coimbatore circle.

Reservation and bookings are made over phone DFO, Coimbatore

District Forest Officer, Coimbatore - 641 043. Phone: 0422-2456911

Forest Range Officer, Karamadai Range - 641 104.

Phone: 94433 84982, 90970 51011.

Many tourists have recorded their pleasant impressions and lovely appreciations of BJET project during April -2007 to May- 2009 after family visit.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 3: Socio-Economic Profile of Coracle Drivers (12) and Self Help Group Women (12)

Particulars	Number (24)	Percentage (100)
Sex		
Male	12	50
Female	12	50
Age (in years)		
25 - 30	9	38
30 - 35	8	33
35 - 45	7	29
Education		
Up to 5 th standard	17	20
5 th - 10 th Standard	6	25
Above 10 th Standard	1	4
Family Members (No.)		
1 - 4	18	75
5 - 7	6	25

Table 3 continued

Table 3 continued

Particulars	Number (24)	Percentage (100)
Experience		
Canoe 2 - 5	5	20
Rowing 5 - 10	7	29
Catering 2 - 5 and Framing AJSS	12	50
Occupation		
Agricultural labour	24	100
Additional Income after BJET Project		
Rs.1000 - 2500	24	100
Tourists no. per week	20 - 150	
Investment		
Savings Bank - Karamadai	15	
Jewel	4	
School education for children	12	50

These results show that after the BJET Project, additional income earned help - tribals to raise their standard of living. The investments made by them show that BJET project is successful.

Table 4: Problems and Solutions

Problem	1. Less No. of tourists in off / rainy seasons	18
	2. Non eco-friendly items (papers) brought sometimes	13
	3. Low tariff	12
	4. Lack of awareness about jungle eco tourism	24
	5. SHG women have to get groceries from town	12
Suggestions	1. Increase in tariff	18
	2. Plenty mineral water bottles	12
	3. Small shelter for rainy season	15
	4. More publicity required	20

Conclusion

The tribal and forest department partnership for tribal livelihood support through social entrepreneurship and eco tourism has kindled hopes in the minds of the tribals of the Western Ghats. The cascading effect of BJET success is amazing. This success model is implemented in Sirumalai, Tamilnadu also now. This can be implemented in other suitable states in India. Enchanting eco tourism nurtures tribal entrepreneurs successfully.

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