

# Potential of Rural Tourism in West District, Sikkim: A Case Study of Dentam Valley

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## Abstract

Rural tourism is a kind of tourism that sustain or enhance the environment, economic, socio-cultural, and aesthetic character of the place as well as wellbeing of its local residence. Rural tourism gives an opportunity to see natural beauty, local values (in terms of social cultural aspects) of the place.

Dentam is a beautiful and small valley little known to the tourist as this beautiful tourist destination is located in the far western part of Sikkim. It is well known for the eco-friendly and socio-cultural aspects. It is also counted as one of the largest producers of cardamom in our state, Sikkim. It offers a panoramic view, river water, adventure and culture give mesmerizing feeling to the tourist. Even though rural tourism has great opportunity in the sustainability and economic development as well as state in general. But at present less effort on advertising and marketing has been done by the government and the individuals makes lesser of that potential of rural tourism in Dentam Valley. The area of study aims to highlight the potential of rural tourism and its socio-economic development, management plan in Dentam Valley.

**Keywords:** Dentam Valley, Rural Tourism, Features, Sikkim.

### Introduction

Tourism industry is the fastest growing industry which acquire one of the important positions in the global economy. It provides larger employment opportunity (directly or indirectly) of in all categories of peoples (skilled, unskilled). It also gives an opportunity to earn net foreign exchange earnings, exchange of knowledge and understanding cultural values, most importantly tourists helps to build a friendly environment and relation to other countries. Now a day tourism become very advance and sophisticated that offers varieties of product in the various types and forms like eco-tourism, village tourism, wilderness tourism, medical tourism, and rural tourism is one of its kind.

Rural tourism is a type of tourism which offer tourist to enjoy and experience quality time with different ethnic and indigenious and aesthetic practice in rural areas. Due to heavy duties in urban areas people are exhausted and distance from the nature. In this case rural tourism seems to be an ideal place to release stress and also it offers rest and peace to rejuvenate for the certain period of time.

Dentam is a small valley located 133 km from gangtok, capital town of Sikkim in west district. It lies at an elevation of 1500m. Dentam offers panoramic view of Mount Kanchenjunga, third highest pick in the world. It is covered by the forest of Rhododendrons. Many beautiful tourist destinations cover under its periphery like Pelling-20 km, Ravangla-69 km, Gyazing District Headquarter-31 km, Uttaray the last boarder village with Nepal. Hilley, Chewa Bhanjyang are also nearby interesting destinations to visit. The village also offered Bird watchings, Trekking, Mountaineering and many more.

### Objectives of the Study

The aims and the objectives of the study is to highlight the overall tourism sustainable development of Dentam valley besides other aims to highlight have been identified which are present below:

1. To provide information about the natural and social values of this area.
2. To promote and foster the tourism development of this area.
3. To find out the problems and prospects of this area.
4. To expose the tourism potential of this area.



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**Research Methodology**

Research and study have been done through both explorative and descriptive manner. Primary data collection has been done through pilot survey, area visit, field study, conversation with local, knowledgeable people of this area. Collection of photography has also done in this study. Secondary data has collected through study and analysis of published materials related to rural tourism, biodiversity, custom and tradition, important tourist destination.

**Review of literature**

Sikkim-geographical prospective by Maitreyee Chaudhary (2006) which contain the physical geography of Sikkim, the demography of Sikkim, ethnic diversity which include tribe, communities, and culture of Sikkim. She has focused more on tourism and on the economic profile of Sikkim availability of amenities and infrastructure and the quality of life in Sikkim.

Dr. Bedhas Ujjwal Mandal (2003) in his International Journal of science and research describe the fluvial landscape related land utilization pattern, problems management of micro basin of Sikkim, Himalaya, namely Dentam river, Sikkim.

Nari Rustamji's- Sikkim-a Himalayan tragedy tell us only about the history of Sikkim but without the history tourism in Sikkim may be incomplete.

The Sikkim Association of Adventure of Tour Operators (SAATO) a journal which contains the little bit of Sikkim history highlights about the flora and fauna, important caves, culture, people, fairs and festivals, religions, monastery and some other tourist spots of Sikkim.

The glory of new Sikkim edited by Mahindra P.Lama, IPR (information public relation) has mainly focus on transport, hotel, accommodation, eco-friendly and pilgrim tourism, adventure tourism etc.

Sikkim the people vision 2001 are concern with the future respect of tourism, the impact of tourism, which are the main contents.

Author (This paper is probably first of its kind .so not much work has been done on it.further it's very difficult to get any latest literature review on this topic.)

**Area of Study**

Sikkim one of the smallest states located at the north eastern part of India, famous for its peace and tranquility added with natural beauties give an amazing flavor to the nature lover. Sikkim has only four districts, East (gangtok), South (namchi), North (mangan) and West (gyazing).

Dentam, a small valley located in the heart of west district covered by three side of river viz Bhaga khola, Dentam Khola and College khola. Extended from 27-degree 12 N to 27-degree 16 N and 88-degree 9 E to 88-degree 10 E. Summer temperature goes up to 24-25-degree Celsius and Winter goes to 3 to 4 degree Celsius.

**Present Status and Discussion**

Dentam valley located 99 sq km from Gangtok and 26 km for Gyazing (west district). It lies an elevation of around 1500 m. Dentam offer a beautiful scenic views of mount Knachanzonga, the entire area is covered by rhododendron forest, pelling a famous tourist sport of Sikkim is just 19 km within the periphery. Besides pemayangtse monastery, rabdentse ruins (2<sup>nd</sup> capital of Sikkim), are other attractions nearby. Famous singshore bridge (2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Asia) is located nearby Dentam. The last village to Nepal boarder "Utterly" is just one-hour drive from Dentam.

According to the data realise by the sikkim tourism department 1,33,388 foreign tourists visited in Sikkim during 2018-19 and 14,26,127 domestic tourist visited Sikkim which is an encouraging figure on global tourism map. Dentam valley of west district is emerging as an important tourist destination for both domestic and international tourist. It has a potential to develop rural tourism because of its rich natural and cultural values. This place is of naturally or geographically important as we find here a rich biodiversity (flora and fauna) cultural aspects, fresh river water, untouched eco-friendly environmental features.

**Possibilities**

1. This place is a remote and nature based rural tourism.
2. It offers a rich biodiversity.
3. It is a center point for many other important tourist destinations of west district.
4. It is well connected by road to any other district.
5. There is a strong domestic and international tourist attraction places.
6. This place placed the best examples of cardamom production in the state.
7. There is a potential to develop a vision for rural tourism in this area.
8. A potential exists for socio-economic development, job opportunities and training.
9. Undertake educational development and enhancement of rural tourism.
10. There is a scope for holistic sustainable development of this area.

**Problems**

1. There are only few accommodation facilities for rest and relax.
2. There are less infrastructure facilities for the development of tourism.
3. Trained guide facilities are not available here.
4. Improvement of local people are very rare for the development of rural tourism.

**Suggestions**

1. Dentam valley is well connected with all the district headquarter of the state by road ways.
2. Government and the department should organize and trained the people of the village imparting knowledge about tourism potential of this area.

## *Remarking An Analisation*

- Local people residing in this area should also be made aware and provide knowledge to conserve and maintain the beauty of these place.
- Road map should be plan and prepare for high lighting rural tourism attraction. So, that Dentam valley can find a distinct place on global rural tourism map.
- Need to be develop a better lodging facility are affordable rates is necessary for prolong and safer stay of domestic and international tourist.
- Public, scholar tourist and the student should be undertaken for enhancement of rural tourism awareness.
- Tourism education should be given to all local people and the tourist through awareness programme, exhibition, poster display and open geographical museum.

**“A view of Dentam Valley”**







**“Night view of Dentam Valley”**







### Conclusion

Tourism is a human resource intensive activity. It is a major source of jobs at varying level of skills. The white range of climatic zones in the state and its diverse culture, religious and ecological base could \_ if tourism targets the right kind of travelers \_expand the industry to a year-round business. Though the Dentam has highly potential growth in rural tourism sector and has far sided vision, the most fruitful industry in term of economy, employment and infrastructure development. Still the valley has not come up to the mark. Appropriate and effective development of tourism could help to alleviate poverty as well as remove some of the regional disparities. Tourism development should be sustainable and undertaken with an environmental impact, analysis in every stage.

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