

# Application Of Grounded Theory In Conceptualizing The Horse Based Tourism: Insights From India

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## ABSTRACT

*Tourism industry in the light of sustainability tourism development can play an important role towards environment protection and its surroundings. So, it is an utmost and foremost responsibility of the stakeholders to take care of the pristine environment through the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in their daily business. This study has taken only one important form of tourism which does not only provides livelihood to the local community but also protects the environment from getting depleted and tries to explore the promotional strategies for its promotion i.e, HBT. Considering the need of the objectives, the study has adopted the qualitative method in order to explore about HBT, with the data collection through the in-depth interviews, as very least information with regard to HBT was found in the literature. In this study almost ten local horse riders, whose livelihood is on horse tourism were contacted and their in-depth interviews were conducted. The collected data was analyzed after applying the coding method of grounded theory method for conceptualizing the definition of HBT. The study concluded with the conceptualization of the horse based tourism as a very dynamic type of tourism having tremendous employment generation for the local community in the context of alpine destinations of India and also the promotional strategies are discussed in this study.*

**Key Words; Horse based tourism, local community, sustainability, tourism promotion**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Horse Based Tourism is the developing sector of tourism industry. It is the Community Based Tourism in which tourist (rider) travel by horse on long tours and or shorter rides. The adventurous activity occurs in rural and urban areas. The customary going with steeds is significant piece of legacy. Horsemanship is the passion in different parts of the world. Different horse breeds are used are used for work. Tourism industry is the hub for breeding of horses. Horse breed differ in size, makeup and giants depending on environment they originate and their breeding through centuries. Horse Based Tourism may include different elements of tourism like- ecotourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism etc. none of which are mutually exclusive. Steed based the travel industry has turned out to be presently

enormous business in France, United Kingdom and Germany. In France Horse Riding was defined by National Resource Center for Outdoor Sport as a sport that occur outside. It is also important in Iceland's. 15% to 18% entertainment activity. The impacts of pony tourism are comparable with the impacts of hiking. It plays the vital role in promoting the tourism.

#### **DMOs (DESTINATION MARKETTING ORGANISATION)**

DMOs are nonprofit organizations focus on generating tourist destination at a given area. They have been the active participants in destination competitiveness, destination branding, destination image. They represent vacations spot and help to increase their long term journey and tourism strategy. They came in various forms such as Tourism Board, Convenient and Visitors Bareau and Tourism Authority. They face number of challenges rising with the tourism industry as for as social, political, conditions and monastery improvements. such difficulties power DMOs to think distinctively and receive new methodologies managing their constituencies and customers. Nowadays DMOs are referred to as " Destination Marketing and Management Organization". Therefore DMOS are becoming more prominent as "Destination Developers by acting as a catalyst for tourism development. The basic function of DMOs is " External Destination Marketing" and "Internal Destination Development".

## **2. HORSE BASED TOURISM IN KASHMIR**

Kashmir is blessed through various natural splendorous, amazing panorama and distinctive seasons. Horse based tourism is vital in mountainous areas, where locals and foreign pass for driving. During summers especially June to August large group of horses and riders are travelling in Kashmir. Zanaskari horse breed or Poney are found in kashmir valley, attract the attention of visitors and tourism scholars. Horse breed can be used for carrying luggage trekking equipments to high lands and pulling carts in urban and rural areas of valley.

#### **ROLE OF PONY TOURISM IN DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL COMMUNITY**

In the state of Jammu and Kashmir, pony tourism plays the vital role in the socioeconomic life of local community. The species (horses) play role in promoting the adventure, cultural tourism in Kashmir, India. GULMARG, SONMARG, PAHALGAM are the dominant destinations for pony tourism. some other horse tourism destinations include; Aharbal, Dhood pathri, tangmarg etc.

#### **GULMARG**

Gulmarg a town, hill station is personification of herbal situated at a distance of 52 km from srinagar. This all weather destination offers numerous option to make a memorable vacation in which horse riding is one of the adventure option. Horses can be hired directly from locals or through the Tourist Office. Tourist police officers are there deal with the tourists, if the pony\_wallahs try to change ridiculous prices for the rides to the various points. Due to horse riding all the sites of Gulmarg can be seen.

#### **PAHALGAM**

Pahalgam is a hill station well\_known for its scenic splendor and is the jewell of attractive Liddar valley. It is located 85Km from srinagar in south kashmir, surrounded by snow capped peaks rising behind. Apart from trekking, rafting, hiking, poney riding is one of the famous adventure option. The relation among humans and horses has been robust and durable.

#### **SONMARG**

Sonmarg is located at a distance of 79 Km from srinagar. It is famous for sceanic beauty of snow caped mountains and green valley. Peak season of horse riding starts during Amarnath Yatra. The

pony walas shipping devotees as much as the cave. The horsemen aware visitors about distinctive Bollywood film capturing points and the name of movies and many others.

TABLE 2:  
Registered Pony Wallas in Kashmir Valley.

No	Destination	Total Registered
1	Pahalgam	899
2	Gulmarg	751
3	Sonamarg	700
Total		2350

Source: DTK Registration Section

### 3. REVIEW OF LITRATURE

The research is based on amalgamation of data collection regarding Destination Marketing Organizations in improving Horse Based tourism. The event of Horse Tourism begin in Europe, North America and Australia all through 1950s\_1960s. The conversation among researchers, providers, and organization is starting to offer a useful definition are definition of the idea. The primary definition diminish horse based tourism pastime at the returned of a horse\_a trail experience of over 24 hours for pleasure. The definition is now open to present way, incorporating the variety of equestrian activities and international definition of Tourism by WTO. Since 2002, AFIT About France define Poney Tourism as "All kinds of leisure linked to HORSES, PONIES, DONKEYS, practiced by a person outside their normal place of residence for more than 24hours and less than 4 months". It means that Horse Based Tourism is not most effective a trip on horse again however every horse oriented traveler hobby. The diversity of marketplace which include tourism on horseback as an appeal like events, indicates, museums, racing and so forth. As a result of diversity, pony tourism can be realized as a area of tourism inclusive of nature based tourism, event tourism, heritage tourism and adventure tourism and the destination should be away from all types of risks for the effective tourism business (Najar, et. al., 2020).

In France horse riding came into existence in 1950s and get well established after 1970s and have made riding accessible to socially diverse population group. The rapid boom of pony golf equipment in France has resulted in considerable increase inside the quantity of individuals, growing nearly five\_fold between 1984 and 2012. According to an estimate by Sofres-Fival, it is observed that number pony riders is almost 2.2 million, with one third of these being regular riders and two thirds casual riders. According to IFCE 2011, the total horses registered with IFCE\_SIRE is about 930,000. Out of 8,000 pony strectures in France, 80% of such offices had some expertise in preparing along these lines in open air and indoor regions. Just 20% of such business have some expertisein balancing out horse the travel industry.

Consistent with 2011 facts by Catesjon and Rodriguez there have been 157,965 farms and centures with general 683,645 animal species in Spain. The range of films whose basic business is horse tourism in nearly 500. Castejon and Rodriguez praposed that maximum equestrain activities are rural accomodation inclusive of horseback riding (30.4%) or conventional galas, piligramages or sports gathering (25.3%). Out of that simplest 6.5 are lengthy horse trek. As in islands, maximum riders are accomplished wherein simplest 25% are foriegners. According to Obadovics and Kulcsar (2014) the development of horse based tourism industry occur as a result of nation history. The number of horses decrease as a result of historical events from the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> due to Word War and focused political

priorities changed agriculture into supporting cooperatives and abolished private firms. The development of pony tourism in global economy has characterise North America. Evans claimed that the Canadian horse industry contributed more than \$19 billion to the economy yearly and provide more than 154,000 jobs. Vangeois underlines the fact that in province of British Columbia the largest increase in horsemanship. According to 2009 Horse Council BC equine study has been recreational sector. According to Vangeous, the horse industry in British Columbia raises \$73 million in economic events including 7,200 full time jobs and \$73 million direct govt. revenues.

Finally, the horse tourism industry and horse based tourism has also become an important aspect in Australia. According to Bell and Drury\_Klein (2011) the size of domestic horse tourism market reaches more than 5,000 riders travel with horse weekly. In Souths Dalka, tourism plays an Important role in Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary. The Sanctuary receives 20,000 visitors per year who are taken on bus tours to visit some habituated wild horse bands and are also introduced to other areas having cultural and natural significance. The International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros (ISPMB) in South Dakota posses farmland on the Cheyenne River Lakota Sioux Reservation which acts as a conservation centre for displaced mustang herds. Between 2001 and 2009, Ginger Kathrens produced three films which attract attention to the Pryor Mountains and boosted visitor interest in mustang head. Wild pony looking is a firmly entrenched interest amongst site visitors to the barrier island of the US Eastern Seaboard: from Assateague over Corolla, Ocracoke and Shackleford in North Carolina to Cumberland Island is placed inside best a half of the day's drive of one-fifth of United States population and is closely pastimes and traffic range climax inside the pony penning, swim and auction which attract crowds in tens of thousands.

The Assateague horses have been world famous with the aid of Marguerite Henry's ebook Stable Island is some other iconic region in many human's mind placed 300km of the fee of Nova Scotia, Canada. This form shifting ghost of an island was already a Canadian landmark when distinctive a country wide park 2013 thus far, access turned into confined and the island's uncommon flowers and fauna including it is most well known inhabitants, artists, photographers and cinematographers, inclement weather and hard sea's are probable restriction visitation within the density, however the tourism industry is casting an interested eye on this uncommon location. The pony as a tourism appeal appears to be viewed as an combined flora and fauna, cultural history, an aesthetic resource and a source of non secular inspection. It's miles celebrated each for it is in historic ties to human history and for having reclaimed it is wild background.

#### *Promotional strategies taken by DMOs for Horse Based Tourism*

##### *Segmentation:*

Market segmentation has become one of the main practice in promoting the destinations famous for horse tourism. Pahalgam (Kashmir) is ideal for Horse Based Tourism. Department of Tourism, Government of Jammu and Kashmir; Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation allow every year in the month of July\_ August, thousands of pilgrims (Amarnath yatra) descend on pahalgam on their way to holy cave. The pilgrims as well as other visitors avail the pony service for leisure and carriage purpose.

##### *Film tourism:*

Study of film tourism is new research sometimes called "movie induced". Tourists visit a destination as a result of destination's being featured on Cinema Screen, Tele\_Vision, Social media and video. DMOs use film as a spring board for marketing campaigns if the films are seen as appropriate for destination. marketing opportunities are being produced, when the film is being launched and distributed as well as during each release window. In Pahalgam (Kashmir) many movies like *Khel Khel Mein*, *Khamosh* and parts of the more recent Salman

Khan starrer Bhajrangi Bhaijhan have been filmed to promote the Horse Based Tourism destination in valley.

#### *Establishment of Eco-sanctuaries.*

Eco-sanctuaries and protected sites are important tool in the process of recognizing and meeting diverse stakeholders (DMOs) needs and creating emotional and experimental value through heritage designation. The recent phenomena of Eco Sanctuaries in USA are intended to be partially self-sufficient through tourism. This imitative is designed to provide the better habitat for animals removed from their herd management areas only to stock piled in long term holding. The first Bereau of Land Management sponsored wild horse eco-santuary in 2013 during summers. Eco-sanctuaries indicates real benefit of horse based tourism to visitors, host communicates, horses and their habitat.

#### *Involvement of locals.*

The community involvement in pony tourism affects the sustainability of the tourism industry. It has been a tool for economic development Akhtar, S and Najjar, A.H (2020). The DMOs provide permission to locals at different destinations for pony tourism like; Pahalgam Development Authority (PDA) provide regestation to pony wallas

### **4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

To study about the horse based tourism and role of government stakeholders towards horse based tourism and its promotion and in Local community development.

### **5. RESEACH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology is based on the qualitative approach and primary data collection.

#### **RESEARCH APPROACH and METHOD**

In the globe of research, there are two well-known methods to accumulating and reporting information: qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative technique to investigate is centered on expertise a phenomena from closer perspective. The quantitative method has tendency to approximate phenomena from a large wide variety of people the use of survey technique. In this research, the qualitative approach has been adopted.

### **6. QUALITATIVE APPROACH**

The qualitative approach to gather information focuses on describing a phenonmena in a deep comprehensive manner. This is normally achieved in interviews, open-ended questions, or cognizance businesses. In most instances, a small quantity of participants participate on this sort of studies, because to perform one of these research enterprise requires many sources and time. Interviews can vary from being pretty structured and guided by means of open ended questions or be less structured and take the shape of a conventional interview. Because of the investment on this type of research and the especially few quality of members, findings from qualitative studies can't be generalized to the complete populace. However, such research serves as a spring board for large studies and deeper expertise which could inform idea, practice and particular conditions.

### **7. RESEACH INSTRUMENTS**

Research instruments are dimension tools designed to attain records on a subject of interest from studies difficulty. Here in this study the Interview checklist is being adopted with the help of interviews. Interviews are frequently accomplished in qualitative research and arise when researchers ask one or greater members preferred open-ended questions and document their answers.

### **8. RESEARCH TECHNIQUE: Grounded Theory Method**

### ***Coding and Decoding:***

#### ***Coding:***

The coding questions will offer same information that is in code shape. This facts can be decoded the use of the key that is gift either within query or within the choice. Coding is the process of identifying a passage in the text.

#### ***Types of coding***

- Open coding:

At the first level, we look for distinct concepts and categories in the data which form the basic unit analysis.

- Axial coding:

- I. In axial coding, we use our concepts and categories while re-reading the text to
- II. Confirm that your concepts and categories accurately represent interview responses.
- III. Explore how the concepts and categories are related.

- Selective coding:

Figure out the core variable that includes all of the data. Then reread the transcript and selectively code any data that relates to the core variable you identified.

#### ***Decoding:***

Decoding is the method of converting code into undeniable textual content or any layout that is useful for subsequent technique. It's miles the reserve of encoding. It converts encoded data conversation transmission and documents.

SAMPLE DESIGN.

SAMPLE UNIT:

The sample unit of research is pony walla (Horse Riders) including males as well as females.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

The **sampling technique** is purposive sampling.

**Sample Size:** through Theory Saturation.

**Sampling Extent:** Sonamarg, Gulmarg and Pahalgam

### **DISCUSSION**

Contextualization of HBT

#### **9. HORSE BASED TOURISM**

Horse based tourism can be defined as the riding activity that acts as an economic tool based on traditions.

#### ***Profession of riding***

Professional activity depends upon riding of horses. It involves lot of skills like- handling the stand of horses, hygiene and rising agent.

It is one of the activities which involve culture, family, business and local community

#### ***Ancestral activity***

Tourism based on heredity: As per study, it has been observed, that horse based tourism is an activity which is basically hereditary, that is there is an emotional aspect of family linked to pony wala and is profession of passion as one of the respondent reported that- “Horse based tourism is not only the source of income but our passion.”

Also in addition to this during interview it has found that horse based tourism is rural people livelihood who rely on it because it provides them bread and butter, as one of the respondent reported that- ***“It provides us the bread and butter.”***

Riding as day to day income

Horse based tourism provide pony wallas income as one of the respondent reported that- ***“it is a source of income for the people of rural areas.”***

#### *HBT PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES*

Pony tourism can be promoted through following ways viz:

- *Earning source through traditional ways and hospitality.*

Horse based tourism is the source of income for pony wallas. It is promoted by adopting traditional ways and hospitality. As one of the respondent reported that- ***“we promote horse tourism by providing horses to tourists for making their trek comfortable and make them able to reach to destinations where vehicles are not reachable”.***

- *Recreational activity having less impacts on environment.*

Horse based tourism is a recreational activity because it involves horse riding through rural areas. It is also based on hospitality as one of the respondents reported that- ***“we promote horse tourism by providing horses to tourists for making their trek comfortable and make them able to reach to the destinations where vehicles are not reachable.”***

#### *GOVERNMENTAL INITIATIVES REGARDING HBT*

The state government takes following steps to develop horse based tourism in the valley.

##### *Sustainable tourism activity that receives less attention from government*

Horse tourism is a sustainable activity, as it produces fewer pollutants as compared to vehicles, but still government is paying less attention toward it, as one of the respondent reported that ***“Government hardly takes care of our business and they don't provide us any support”.***

##### *Registration and licensing*

Government provides them other facilities. As one of the respondents reported that- ***“Government only provides us registration and nothing more.”***

#### *ENGAGED STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS HBT DEVELOPMENT:*

The local community shows their interest for the development of pony tourism in following ways.

- *Profession based on hard work.*

Horse based tourism is completely based on hard work, pony wallas have to take care of horses, handle lot of tourists to provide them services. As one of the respondent reported that- ***“As people save their vehicles, same is the case with our horses. We have to take care of horses and make them available for visitors.”***

*Part of adventure tourism.*

Horse tourism is an adventurous activity which involves riding in remote areas, as one of the respondents reported that-***“As horse riding is itself interested. We show warm nature to tourists visiting here. We provide them shoes etc. for trekking.”***

*Pony tourism as a source of income.*

Horse tourism acts as an economic generator tool because pony wallas are dependent on this activity, as one of the respondents reported that-***“our family is based on pony tourism. It uplifts our family income as well as standard of living.”***

#### **POSITIVE ASPECTS OF HBT TOWARDS FAMILY INCOME**

##### *Dependency*

The life of pony wallas is dependent on pony business. It not only provides them bread and butter but it uplift their living standard. As one of the respondent reported that-***“Our family is based on pony tourism lifts our family income as well as standard of living”.***

##### *Discontinuous process*

Horse based tourism is seasonal activity in Kashmir because weather doesn't remain same throughout the year. As one of the respondent reported that-***“Horse tourism is seasonal business; we earn six months and spend that money in twelve months.”***

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overall study describes about ‘Conceptualising the Horse Based Tourism (HBT after the application of grounded theory method. The aim of this research is the Horse Based Tourism, its potential, role of stakeholders and local community towards its promotion. This research is purely qualitative. After going through literature and interaction with the DMOs ( DTK) and pony wallas of Sonamarg, I came to know that, pony tourism is a business oriented activity that requires minimum capital but provides maximum yield. This type of tourism is based on skills like; motivation, service etc. ponies of the Kashmir provide entertainment to numerous tourists and carry their belongings up and down while trekking over the beautiful slopes of valley.

#### **10. SUGGESTIONS**

- As DMOs and local community are responsible for the promotion of whole tourism industry, pony tourism is part of tourism industry, it should be promoted instead of bike riding in the areas having sensitive species through news papers, social media etc.
- DMOs to develop the infrastructure of the pony tourism destinations (pahalgam, sonmarg, gulmarg).
- DMOs should register the horses according to the carrying capacity of the destination and the local community of the pony tourism destinations should focus on the hygiene of horses and themselves to make it attractive activity.
- Pony wallas should handle the psychocentric tourists and make riding comfortable for them and there should be a separate department of DTK for pony tourism.
- Horse riding should be included in the package tour (itinerary) and for the same the booking should be done through the online portal in collaboration with pony wallas to offer horse riding at affordable rate.
- Pony wallas should keep the first aid with them for the safety of the riders.

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