

## Improving Lives and Livelihood through Community Based Rural Tourism



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**ABSTRACT:** A common feature of remote villages is lack of employment opportunities that forces young people to out-migrate. This results in communities left with mainly children and the old, a decline in the social and cultural fabric and a reduced pride in rural life. In 2005-2006, it became apparent that economic hardship and lack of employment opportunity was causing serious out-migration from the villages of the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttarakhand) in India, to the extent that at least one of the villages was faced with possible shut down. This was the motive for establishing Village Ways, which now works with tourism projects in more than 28 villages across India. The aim was to improve economic opportunity and thereby slow or reverse out-migration in remote rural villages through responsible tourism. Many villages, particularly hill villages cannot sustain their population through traditional agriculture and are in need of new, modern income streams to halt or reverse out-migration and improve opportunity particularly for the young. Since 2005, Village Ways has formed partnerships with community groups in villages that have tourism potential, enabling them to build, own and manage guesthouses to host discerning tourists, who provide income for the communities. This concept effectively combined social enterprise with commercial development. Since founding, community-owned guesthouses have been established across India.

**KEYWORDS:** responsible tourism; impact assessment; village communities; livelihoods; India

### Background

The primary aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of community-based tourism model in villages, which need a supplementary income stream. It also studies the various aspects of system building and community mobilisation work, necessary to set up community-based projects and evaluate their benefits over a minimum time. This study was undertaken at the time when the first five villages of the pilot project located inside the Binsar wildlife sanctuary of the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand, India, after completed 10 years of operations. The evidence of impacts was assessed by a third party organisation, to give fair and clear results, showing the income distribution across households, genders and different castes.

This paper identifies some of the benefits of community-based tourism in the lives and livelihoods of the host villagers, based on detailed income monitoring of individual beneficiaries and feedback from communities. A primary benefit has been the generation of supplementary incomes. Gender-disaggregated financial monitoring results show equitable distribution of tourism income among members of communities. This supplementary income not only enables people to return to their villages to live, but also helps to reduce the risks caused by seasonally poor crop yields or low agricultural prices. Non-monetary benefits cited by communities, include the ability to learn through communicating and sharing experiences with outside guests. This has generated self-confidence, greater pride in their village and enhanced appreciation of the importance of their environment and wildlife, thereby reducing poaching and conserving nature. Likewise, the democratic organisation of the village tourism committees and encouragement of women's participation has improved the governance and the gender balance.

## Introduction

As with many villages in mountainous regions, those of Kumaon in the lesser Himalaya of Uttarakhand, India, are becoming de-populated through out-migration. Lack of local employment opportunities encourages most young men, on completing school, to leave their village to gain employment in the cities, government service or the military. They usually return later in life to their villages and this tradition has led to a remittance economy. They remain the primary residents of the village and continue to stay here, as they have a regular source of income in the form of pension. But this is not the case for most of the other people, who need to do different jobs to earn their livelihood.

An inevitable result is loss of cultural traditions and social structures and a decline in the importance of farming as a means of livelihood. Moreover, houses are abandoned, leading to loss of architectural heritage and the traditional affinity of the people with their environment is eroded. Hill people have as much right to employment as any others and the pressure to migrate is understandable. However, many do not want to leave their villages and would stay if there were earning opportunities nearer home.

Uttarakhand has magnificent scenic value, offering huge potential for domestic and international tourism. However, most of the income from tourism is accrued by the travel organisations or the hotel chains. The remote and poor villagers are largely by-passed by the tourism industry, and they lack financial resources to participate directly in tourism.

In response to this dilemma, Village Ways Pvt Ltd, was established in 2005 as a private Indian company, with Indian and UK directors, to develop community-based tourism within hill villages, in partnership with specially constituted village tourism committees. The target market was a small group of discerning and responsible travellers, who seek to support the local economy and was keen to experience village life in a natural way. The aim was to redress the erosion of traditional values and customs in hill communities and to raise awareness of their environment. This was done by creating a viable and responsible tourism business from the grass roots upwards, which would bring supplementary incomes to the involved communities. It was intended that a fair share of the tourism income would flow directly to the villagers. The venture comprised of a social enterprise that combined development with commerce, in which the village committees are partners in the operations and represented shareholding in the company.

## The Binsar Model

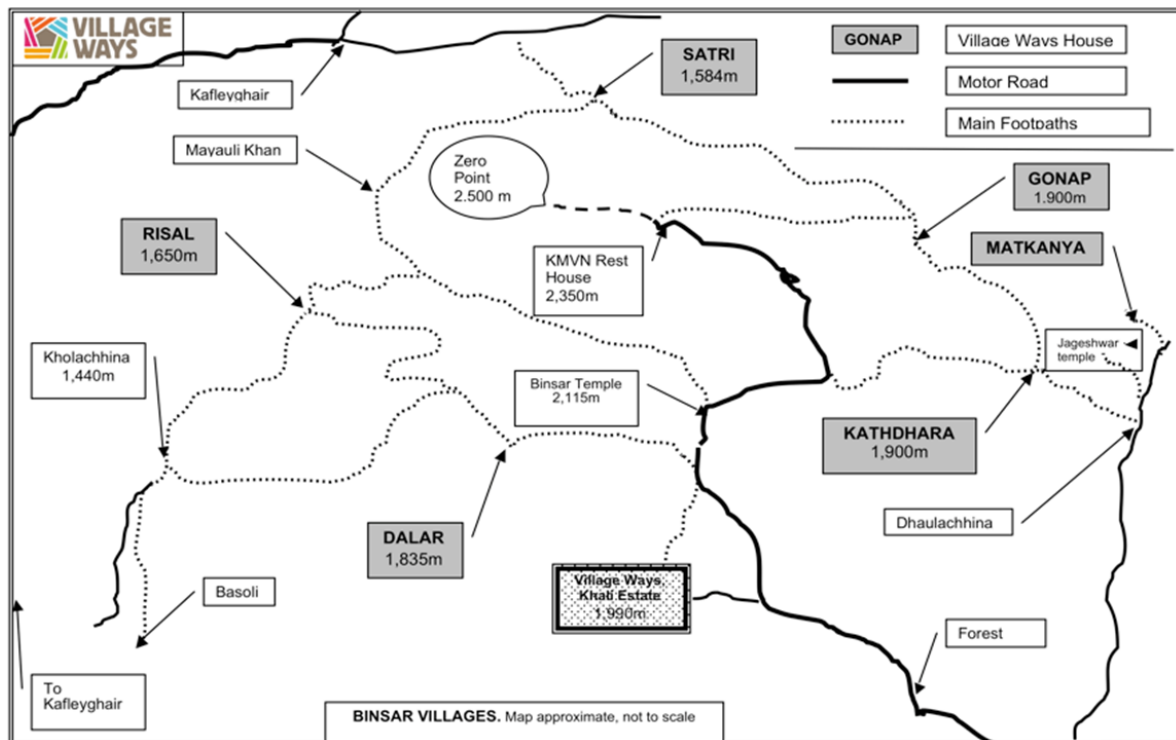


Figure 1: The Binsar Model

The pilot project commenced in the five villages within the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, near Almora, Uttarakhand in year 2005. These villages were under serious threat of outmigration due to lack of livelihood opportunities. The sixth village, joined later, as this was near a famous temple site (frequently visited by guests) and also faced similar issues of livelihood. Virgo (2008) describes the early stages of development. The Sanctuary comprises beautiful, forested terrain, with extensive views of the Himalayan massif. Villagers lived in an uneasy relationship with the Forest Department, which manages the Sanctuary. Farming was fraught by wildlife damage; out-migration for employment was common. One whole village was on the point of migrating, but the prospect of tourism motivated them to stay.

Over two years (2004-2006), Village Ways and the villagers worked together to evolve a suitable model of tourism that would enable guests to walk between villages on the network of footpaths and stay overnight in the village guesthouses. As in any of the community-based development projects, mobilising the villagers and recognising mutual benefits were the keys to success. It was a steep learning curve for both the sides. The Fundamental intention was that the villagers would be partners in the venture, and that all the members of each community would have opportunities to share in the responsibilities and the benefits. Initial reluctance was overcome by patient negotiation. Village Tourism Enterprise (VTE) committees were elected and established in each village, with an apex body (PVS) representing each VTE, to act as the overall decision-making, monitoring and negotiating committee, with a staff member of Village Ways as secretary. Informal links were established with local administrative bodies (Panchayats). The VTEs were encouraged to ensure that participation was evenly distributed across all households, with priority given to families below the poverty line (BPL) and to also ensure reasonable gender balance.

The original concept had been to renovate traditional-style village houses as community-owned and managed guesthouses. The villagers failed to gain legal access to houses from absentee landowners and instead proposed building new houses. This increased the costs but gave an opportunity to create more appropriate designs. Village Ways agreed to fund new houses, subject to basic design requirements (three twin bedrooms, modern toilets and bathrooms, earthquake resistant beams and traditional architectural styles). Responsibility for construction was given to the VTE members, who recruited local artisans and engaged voluntary labour from their communities. The construction brought the villages together, to share skills and local materials, and created healthy competition.

Village Ways injected seed capital to initiate the village guesthouses. Capital costs were funded by Village Ways: 60% as a 30-year interest-free loan and 40% as grant, with fittings, furnishings and fixtures grant-funded. The villagers themselves contributed time, labour and local materials. The village guest houses are owned and managed by the VTEs. The arrangements were formalised through agreements with each GPS and any subsequent changes approved in minutes of meetings.

Now, each VTE arranges a team to manage and operate their guesthouse and some of the larger villages, have also formed working groups to look after guests on a rotation system. The charges for guests are negotiated annually with Village Ways by the PVS. These include stay, food, cleaning, fuel, maintenance, ground rent, porter charges and labour costs, as well as contributions to Village Development Funds that could be used to finance development in the wider community. The VTEs have developed a formal invoicing system, based on guest-night accommodation; invoices are reimbursed on-line by Village Ways to the VTE bank accounts. Loan repayments are deducted at 10% of the guest-nights invoiced: if there are no guests, no repayment is required, which reduces risks to the VTEs. The committees do not allow ad hoc tipping. Guests wishing to tip, do so on the completion of their holiday and the same is distributed openly at monthly PVS meetings. The VTEs agreed that only bookings made via Village Ways would be accepted and the compensation rates for late cancellations were formalised.

From the local villagers, some were identified, trained and equipped as guides, to escort each group of guests. Through their close interaction with the guests, they have become ambassadors for the communities and have successfully raised the local awareness of environmental issues. Village Ways provides regular training to VTE members in hygiene, cooking, household management, in ecology, local history, English, French languages and first aid for guides. From inception, the intention was to limit tourist numbers to provide supplementary income, but without diverting communities from their basic farming livelihood. Over the first 11-year period the 5 Binsar villages hosted 2,924 guest-nights, averaging 45 guest-nights per village annually.

Using the successful VTE model evolved in Binsar, Village Ways expanded to Saryu Valley in Uttarakhand, also also to other states of India and to Nepal, (Virgo, 2011). Minor amendments to VTE systems were made to suit local social conditions. Current holiday destinations can be found at [www.villageways.com](http://www.villageways.com).

A Village Ways Charitable Trust was established (2008) to spread benefits to communities in villages around those where Village Ways was working. It has successfully developed vocational training, created income generating activities and promoted women's health awareness.

## Impact Assessment

Village Ways recognised that impact assessments were needed to verify that intended benefits were reaching VTE communities and to identify where changes in approach may be necessary.

As described by Ashley et al. (2001), tourism can have a broad range of impact on poor communities, principally on financial and livelihood status (human, physical, social, natural capital, access to information), but that the aspects of cultural values, optimism, pride and participation also need to be considered, as well as levels of exposure to risk and exploitation. The Pro-poor Tourism Partnership (2005) argued that an initiative can be described as pro-poor only where it is possible to demonstrate a net benefit for particular individuals or groups. This means that beneficiaries need to be identified, as well as any additional, initially unidentified, wider livelihood benefits. Goodwin (2007) noted that despite a focus of responsible tourism on poverty reduction there had been a lack of beneficiary impact assessment. He identified a need for transparent methods of measurement and reporting of impacts to establish best practice, to meet the needs of the founders and practitioners and also to demonstrate impacts to the community members. More recently, The Travel Foundation (2014) stated that little is still known about the overall impact tourism has on destinations, which adversely affects the industry's ability to manage its impact for the benefit of the destination: to protect the environment, benefit local people and improve customer experience.

Village Ways had been collecting anecdotal information on non-monetary impacts, but lacked understanding of the monetary impacts. In 2010, with assistance from Prof Harold Goodwin of Leeds Metropolitan University, UK, an income impact monitoring system was developed, that adopted a book-keeping approach to trace the flow of money to individual village beneficiaries to capture and measure the contribution of the tourism enterprise in relation to other income streams, such as remittances or other projects. Using Village Ways data, the monitoring system was refined by JUSTreport Global Ltd, which led to the launch of their 'Yardstick' software, a sustainability reporting tool (<https://yardstick.co.uk>) for small businesses. With such reliable and attributable data, it was hoped to robustly defend the causal linkage between changes in livelihoods and the tourism intervention.

## Methodology

Two principal methods were applied to assess the impact of rural tourism in improving the lives and livelihoods of the VTE communities. The reason for this; there were various impacts seen within the communities related to economy, social, traditional and environmental aspects. It was easier for the economic impacts to be recorded, as all payments were set up through banking channels. Also, the payments from VTEs, were recorded by the Village Tourism committees. The evidence for other aspects including social, traditional and environmental, were the secondary impacts, which could only be linked with anecdotal evidence and through other records like meeting notes, photos, among others.

Also, when data was collected, care was taken, that the communities are comfortable about their privacy and that we do maintain a line of sensitive approach, while collecting any information from the villages. The system for collecting monetary data, was helpful for the communities, as it avoided any issues between members for distribution of work/income and

therefore very well accepted and maintained by the community members. Trainings were imparted to the local committees while setting up this system.

- Monitoring income impacts
- Cataloguing non-monetary impacts

### ***Measuring Income Impacts***

The method is based on allocating each village household and its members with unique codes. Each VTE committee uses these codes when recording payments to their members, such as the number of days a person worked on the committee, the wage/day (which the committee mutually decides) and the amount earned by selling local produce for the guesthouse. Only those families, which are directly involved in the Tourism committee, are coded. This helps to also trace additional members who may join or if anyone leaves the committee. The surveys commence with collecting each family's details, including the name, economic category (above or below poverty line – APL/BPL), since when they have lived in the village, their family members' names and ages, their responsibilities on the VTE committee, and their earnings from any other work. During the survey, information is collected on equality of work distribution, amount of other income sources or employment and also about the members who joined or left the committee. This was easy to record because each person had already been given a code.

At the end of each financial year, data are collated for each respective VTE. The data is entered into the Yardstick software for analysis and compiled graphically to illustrate impacts of tourism income at VTE level in relation to total village income, percentage of households involved with tourism, proportion of tourism income earned by females and the mean percentage of income generated from tourism by Village Ways families. The data is then consolidated and presented graphically for each VTE to show annual changes. The income impact surveys have been progressively introduced in all 22 VTEs in India and Nepal. However, for this study, the results focus on the six Binsar villages (Dalar, Satri, Risal, Kathdhara, Gonap and Matkanya).

### ***Measuring Non-monetary Impacts***

Anecdotal evidence was collated on non-monetary impacts, categorise under impacts on human, physical, social and natural capital, access to information, cultural values, optimism, pride and participation, and levels of exposure to risk and exploitation. The evidence was derived from Binsar VTE feedback, committee meetings, villagers' quotes and observations collected by Village Ways staff.

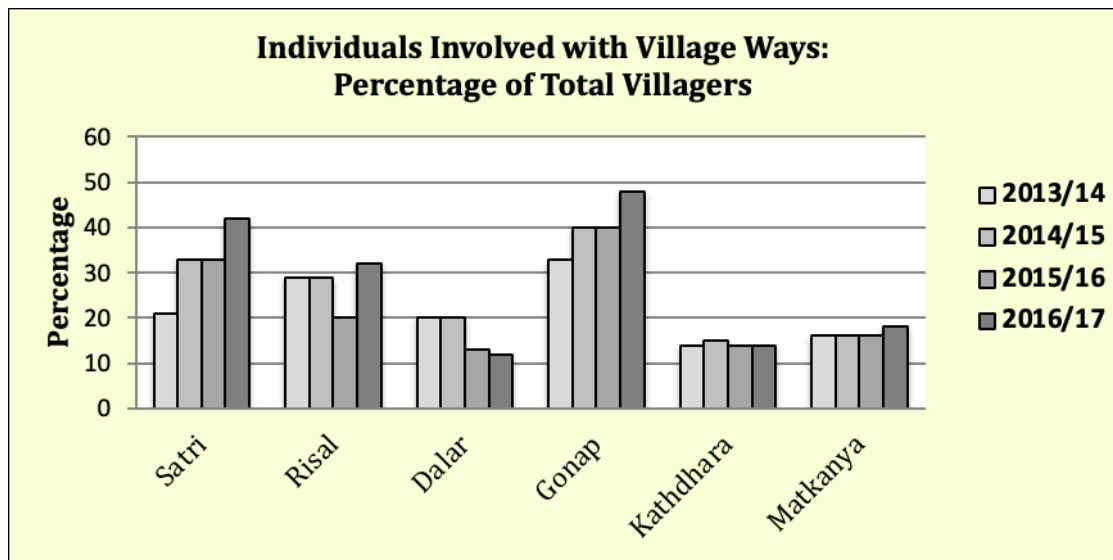
## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Income Impacts***

Initial analyses presented at the London World Travel Market (JUSTreport Global, 2015), showed positive benefits of tourism income. The updated results presented here shows a consistently high proportion of families involved in the VTEs (Table 1), that has changed little over the period. A lower figure is recorded in the largest village of Kathdhara.

**Table 1: Overview of Binsar Village Incomes (2017 data)**

Village	Number of Families			Annual Income (US\$)		Village Ways Income	
	Total	Involved in VW	% Village Ways (VW)	Village Total	From VW	As % total village income	% Earned by Females
Satri	8	8	100%	6,405	812	13	23
Risal	9	7	78%	9,825	1,023	12	2
Dalar	10	10	100%	17,134	8,981	52	9
Gonap	10	10	100%	3,795	1,700	45	41
Kathdhara	27	18	67%	11,757	2,201	19	27
Matkanya	6	7	117%	2,290	237	10	0



**Figure 2: Individuals Involved with Village Ways: Percentage of Total Villagers**

Figure 2 illustrates that the number of individuals involved varies, with higher proportions engaged in smaller villages. Figure 3 charts the changes in tourism-related income by family. This largely reflects to success of marketing in attracting guests, as reflected in the mean family income derived from tourism (Figure 4). Higher guest throughout in the initial years resulted in tourism accounting for up to 40 or 50% of family income: this has now stabilised around 10-20%. The apparent distortion of income in Dalar (Figure 3) is discussed below.

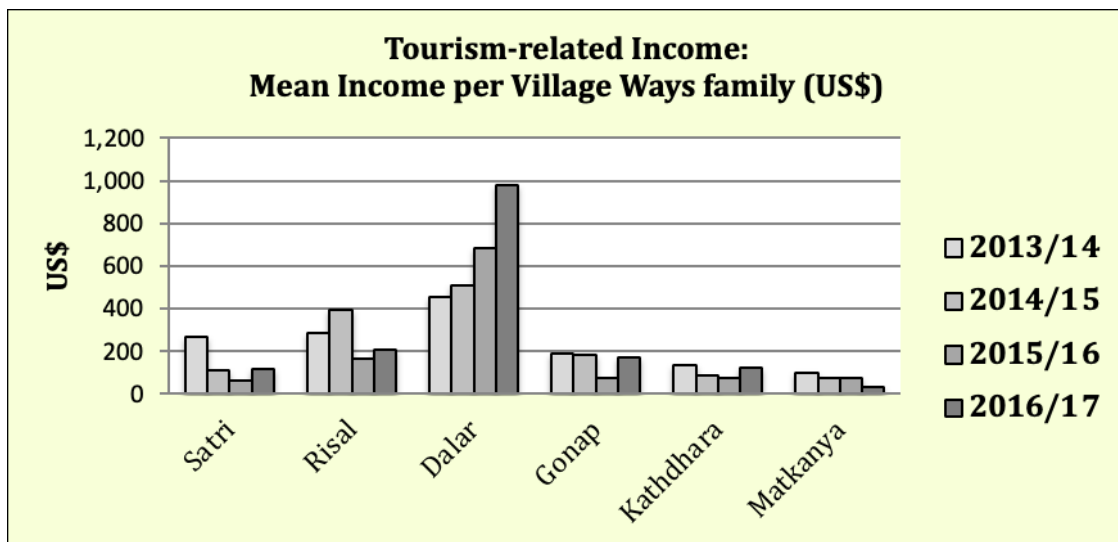


Figure 3: Tourism-related Income: Mean Income per Village Ways family (US\$)

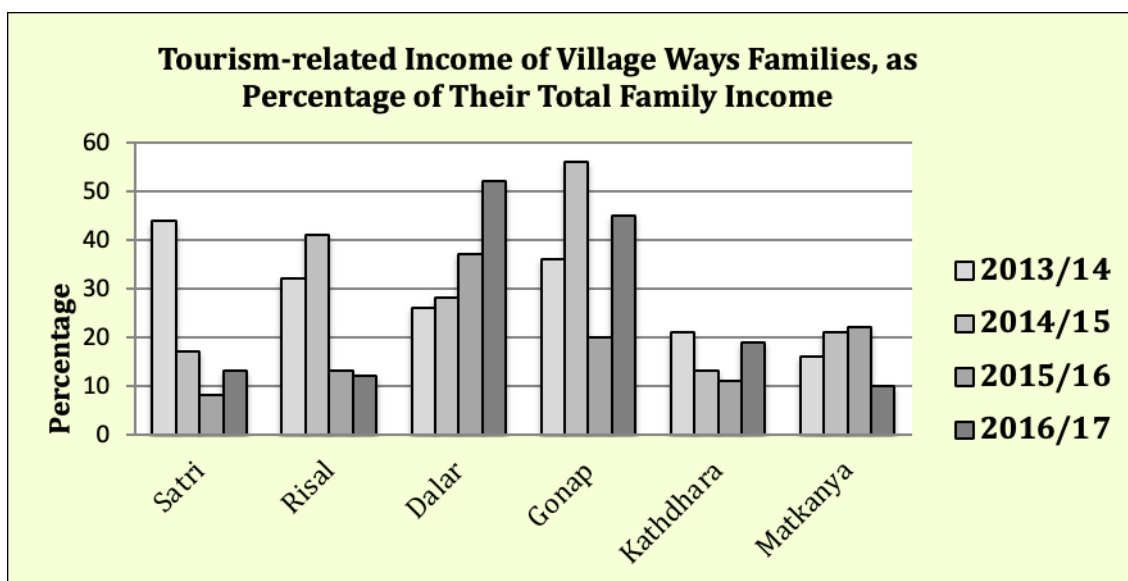


Figure 4: Tourism-related Income of Village Ways Families, as Percentage of Their Total Family Income

In terms of poverty, most income from tourism, goes to BPL families and the proportion has increased slightly (Figure 5). All villages currently comprise at least 80% BPL people, apart from Kathdhara (23%), where over 40% of the VTE is BPL. Figure 6 indicates a reasonable gender balance. Between 25% and 40% of tourism-related income is paid females in participating families. However, Risal, Dalar and Matkanya (in 2016/17) appear less satisfactory, based on reasons as explained in paragraph after figure 4 and 5 in page 10.



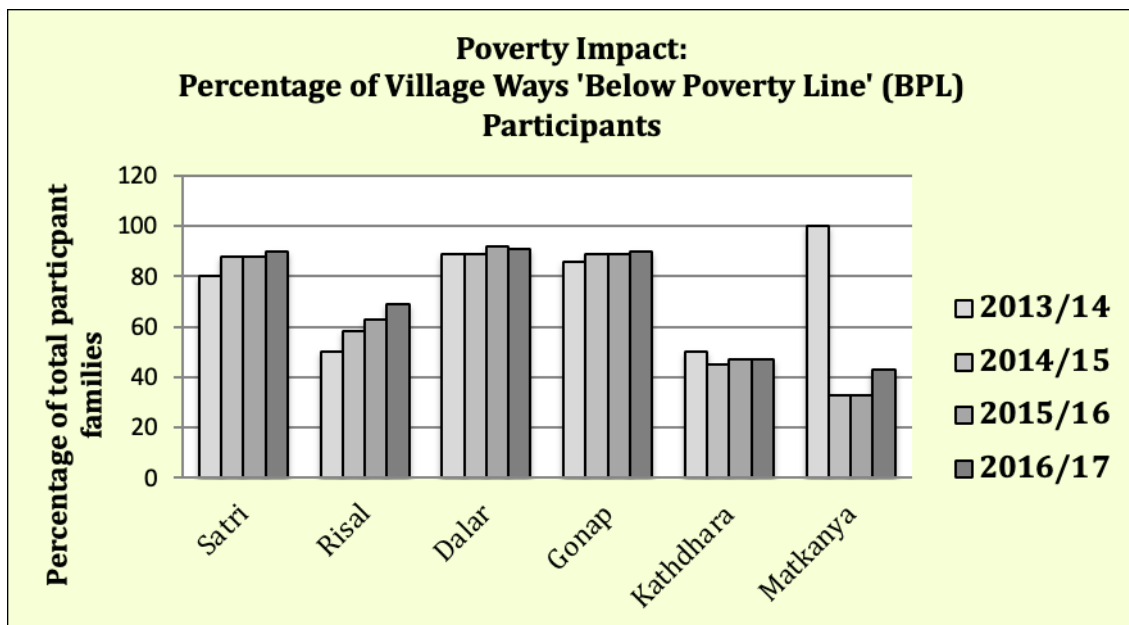


Figure 5: Poverty Impact: Percentage of Village Ways 'Below Poverty Line' (BPL) Participants

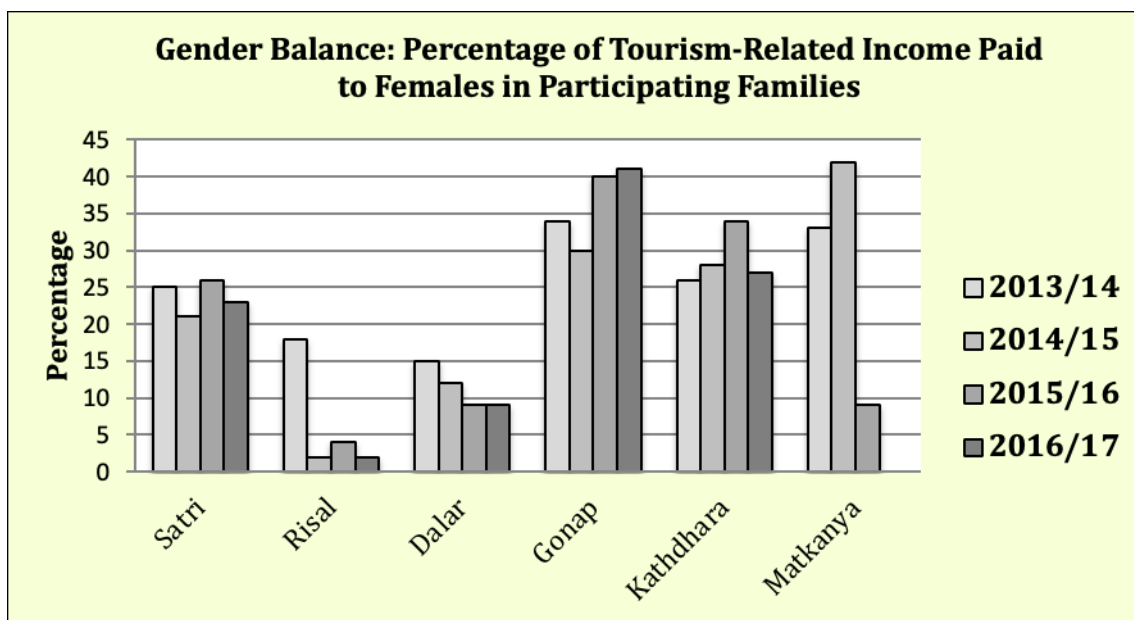


Figure 6: Gender Balance: Percentage of Tourism-Related Income Paid to Females in Participating Families

As Binsar villages are mostly small (Table 1), the number of VTE members and their income values are relatively small. The results are therefore sensitive to small changes in the VTE teams (numbers of members, BPL, gender etc). As the Yardstick database contains information on all individuals in each VTE, it is possible to trace reasons for apparent anomalies in the mean data. For example, the rapid decline in payments to females in Risal in 2014/15 (Figure 6), resulted from one female porter retiring. Likewise, when two APL families joined the Matkanya VTE in 2014/15, there was a drastic fall in ‘% BPL payments’ (Figure 5). Similarly, in Dalar village the disproportionately high tourism income (Figure 3) reflects inclusion of the salary of a villager who was employed full time by Village Ways (as ‘training officer’) but he remains a member of the committee. Moreover, Dalar has produced

five guides, which has further boosted the tourism-related income of the village. As the training officer and guides were all male, relative payments to females have declined (Figure 6). Similarly, the varied values for % of family income from tourism (Figure 4) is often skewed due to changes in remittance and pension incomes by family members.

Other factors influencing village tourism incomes include the ability if Village Ways fairly to allocate guests between villages and, principally, annual variations in guest bookings. To explore the Non-monetary Impacts, several anecdotal evidence and written /printed records were studied and have been detailed in Table 2.

**Table 2: Examples of Non-monetary Impacts Recorded, Binsar VTE Cluster**

### **Human Capital**

- Traditional skills were nurtured by construction of traditional style houses.
- Training, exposure visits and working in committees have imparted skills and knowledge to villagers, which in turn can be applied by them in other areas of hospitality business, locally or outside.
- Training in hygiene has improved family health and guides trained in first aid apply their skills to villagers.
- Women now participate equally in committees, giving them confidences to share opinions and to make decisions not only in tourism work but also within the family. *“Due to the project, we have experienced an equality of genders and age groups”*.
- Children and women have had greater exposure and gained confidence in trying to communicate with guests, some English words. This has also motivated children to study more.
- Acting as trainers within Binsar and in other VTEs in India has given villagers confidence.
- *‘The work made me a humble person, who has gained knowledge in work and humanity in person’*.

### **Physical Capital**

- Villagers own their guesthouses, repaying their loan element over 30 years.
- VTEs have saved income from tourism to maintain and improve guesthouses.
- Village Development Fund, an income also received from tourism, is used for the benefit of the wider community.
- Paths are being repaired by committees to benefit guests and local people.
- *“We have used the village development fund to give short term, interest free loans to our committee members and system for repayment has been set up to ensure discipline and timelines”*.
- *“All day-to-day accounts are maintained by the committee, and we discuss and distribute payments to our members regularly ensuring that there is equal distribution of work and income in the village”*.

### **Social Capital**

- The tourism income has encouraged the younger villagers, who had migrated to cities, to return; others decided not to leave. Family life is strengthened, and the

elderly are no longer left alone.

- The social cohesion and sense of mutual support of the villagers has enhanced by a common tourism interest and need to create links between the villages.
- The tourism business resulted in people of all six villages being more connected which built strong bonding and unity. They discuss and seek solutions to any issues in the village or the Sanctuary.
- Village organisations have developed capacity for planning, allocating responsibilities, financial management and conflict resolution.
- Traditional caste barriers are eroding, due to the common need to look after the guests.
- *“The trust and faith between the committees and Village Ways is the key for our business. Government policies changes after 5 years but our policies, clarity and transparency has not changed”*.
- *“Village committee members, guides, and Village Ways staff, have had great respect for this project and, in mutual understanding, we have been working for many years – we hope it will be forever”*.
- *“We do have professional and personal arguments on the committees, but we do not allow these to affect the work of the committee”*.

### **Natural Capital**

- Villagers now see wildlife as an asset: Forest Department reports reduced poaching, timber smuggling, and more cooperation in fire prevention. With mindsets changed, villagers are now protecting wildlife and forest.
- The Guesthouse requirements have encouraged growing of fresh local fruit and vegetables. Field husbandry has also improved.
- Tourism and farming seasons are compatible, enabling agriculture, the primary livelihood source, to continue in off-peak tourism periods. *“Village Ways has benefited the villagers without disturbing their routine work, they still take care of their farms and cattle”*.

### **Access to Information**

- New training and exposure visits have given more knowledge and experience to the villagers and our guides have ready information on wildlife, ecology, history, etc.
- *“We have gained a lot of knowledge, which has improved our work and the project has given us great support, due to which we are here in our village with our family”*.
- A guide observed: *“Income is not everything, we have learnt so much from interacting with guests, and we are proud to show them our lives”*.

### **Cultural Values**

- Satri village has developed their song and dance skills for guests.
- Local heritage recognised: Kathdhara villager opened museum to conserve artefacts to show the tools, utensils and other equipment used earlier in farming and other activities to guests.
- *“We have observed that our way of life, is so much appreciated by guests, as they take interest to be part of our festivals, ceremonies and like to participate*

with us”.

### **Optimism**

- Residents of Satri were about to migrate *en masse* but decided to stay, attracted by the prospects of receiving tourism income under Village Ways: “*An answer to our dreams*”.
- “Before Village Ways, no one visited our village and now we have so much exposure to the outside world through the guests who visit us and stay in our guest house in our village”. Lines by a member of the smallest village Satri.

### **Pride**

- Villagers have developed a sense of pride in their traditions and lifestyles, through exposure to outsiders, with whom they are keen to share and learn.
- “Our villages were awarded ‘as the best destination worldwide’ and we were so thrilled and full of pride to know about this”. Binsar village members mentioned in a committee meeting after hearing about winning the Times Greenspace awards in year 2008.

### **Participation**

- “*Everyone had an opportunity to speak and contribute. If this happened in all organisations, no one would be poor*” – Quote from a local visitor attending a Binsar villagers’ committee meeting.

### **Exposure to Risk & Exploitation**

- “*Risks of fluctuating farm yields and prices can be attenuated by supplementary income from tourism*”.
- All guesthouse bookings are via Village Ways, avoiding exploitation by officials seeking to stay.
- Compensation by Village Ways for late cancellations reduces financial risks.
- VTEs repay Village Ways loans as a 10% cess per guest-night: if no guests, no repayment is expected.
- “All systems are set up by Village Ways in consultation with us and this ensures that we have no problems with the type of guests visiting our villages and, in any payments, as all payments are made through banking channels”.

The examples of non-monetary impacts (Table 2) are largely subjective, but they indicate the wider benefits of responsible tourism. Most impacts relate to human and social capital, which benefit individuals and communities beyond tourism. Villagers appreciate that the tourism work and supplementary income have enabled them to stay in their villages. Awareness of wildlife, knowledge and pride in village life and culture has been enhanced. Raising human capital through training and experience has enabled guides to obtain employment elsewhere: this may be a negative impact for Village Ways, but it has created worthwhile opportunities for guides. Villagers appreciate that by adopting the community guesthouse approach, instead of homestays, guests and homeowners can retain their privacy, benefits can be shared more widely, and jealousies are reduced. Moreover, the guesthouses represent new physical capital, and their community operation, as partners of Village Ways, has strengthened social unity.

## Conclusions

Through the concept developed in the villages inside a wildlife protected area, we observed that with initial help in setting up the systems, committees and guides also developed their own institutional arrangements and constitution for day to day running and management of their tourism enterprises. Transparency has been maintained and the VTEs have provided mutual support to each other especially in interactions with the Forest Department and other government agencies. Members have acted as trainers in new ventures in other states and as host trainers for people on exposure visits to Binsar. The Binsar model has successfully built on the entrepreneurship of villagers to create what have become Village Tourism Enterprises (VTEs).

The income impact has been positive, demonstrating equality of distribution of tourism income across families, genders and poverty levels. The transparency of the survey methods created in ownership by villagers, has been implemented successfully and maintained by the VTEs at the time of payments to their members, and this data is collected from the villages by Village Ways after the end of each financial year. The Yardstick software proved to be a practical platform for monitoring incomes in small villages and the database on individuals enables interrogation to explain anomalies.

As intended, tourism has provided supplementary earnings, but has not replaced traditional village livelihoods, thereby avoiding over-dependence on tourism the risk of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Marketing is critical to attracting guests to generate tourism income and villagers appreciate that tourism is like farming: some seasons are good others are bad. The international marketing has been managed by Village Ways Founding team members based in the United Kingdom and the domestic market is being managed by the India based sales and marketing team members.

An extract from a report by Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India stating the reasons for failure of Rural Tourism projects, illustrates the importance of marketing and inflow of Tourists for such projects, without which, no efforts will be fruitful (ACNielsen ORG-MARG, 2010)

“The basic trend that can be observed amongst the unsuccessful projects is that the implementation of hardware and software components has been incomplete or not started at all. The most intrinsic reason for most projects being categorized as unsuccessful or average is that the tourist flow to the project areas has been nil or very low”.

Most non-monetary impact has been in developing social and human capital, through good governance, transparency and participatory community operation. All people involved are respected equally and have the right to speak. Mutual trust and respect with our partner communities is the key to success. Villagers appreciate the long-term partnership, compared to the short time scales of most development projects.

Village Ways has since expanded to more than 30 villages across India and the neighbouring country of Nepal. The same model has been replicated in all other villages. Apart from the guest houses, one different concept of community managed houseboat project, was also developed in the southern state of Kerala famous for its backwaters. Funding projects was possible because of the income derived by Village Ways from selling tours and the profits were reinvested into new communities, however Covid-19 brought a new challenge and in

the absence of the income from guest bookings, Village Ways undertook various government consultancy projects to sustain and support the local communities to maintain their enterprises and motivation. In the absence of international guests, Village Ways focussed all efforts on domestic marketing and was successful to form strong partnerships with likeminded companies. Together with their support and their own marketing efforts, Village Ways was able to send good number of guests to the first villages in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand.

Currently work is also restarting on International marketing, as this is very helpful for the business to get profitable and thereby expanding the reach to many other rural areas, which are in need of an alternate source of livelihood.

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