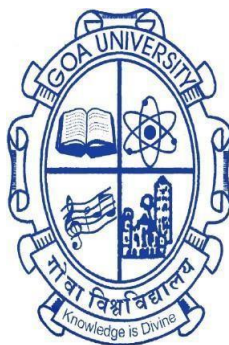


PERIPHERAL TOURISM – CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in Management Studies

Goa Business School
GOA UNIVERSITY



By

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NOVEMBER 2025

DECLARATION

I, Madhumita Mahatme hereby declare that this thesis represents work which has been carried out by me and that it has not been submitted, either in part or full, to any other University or Institution for the award of any research degree.

Place: Taleigao Plateau.
Date: 26.11.2025

Madhumita Mahatme

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the above Declaration of the candidate, Madhumita Mahatme is true and the work was carried out under my supervision.

Professor Nilesh Borde
Goa Business School

Acknowledgment

This thesis is dedicated with deep reverence to my Spiritual Guru, Guide, and Divine Mother – Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi. It is through Her divine blessings, guidance, and inspiration that this journey was made possible. Her presence has been my constant source of strength and purpose throughout this long and transformative academic endeavour.

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Dedicated at the Holy Lotus Feet of the Divine Mother,
Shree Mataji Nirmala Devi



Obeisance to You, Beloved Mother, for the Gift of Life

Dedicated to the Most Beautiful Souls God Blessed Me with on Earth —
My Late Parents – Smt Leena and Shri Bishwanath Pathak



Maa and Bapi — A Promise Fulfilled.

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Abstract

Purpose - Goa, India's smallest state, known for its sun, sand, sea, and lush green vegetation, depends largely on tourism as the main driving force of its economy. Employment opportunities, equitable regional economic development, alternative sources of income, social inclusion and the transfer of tourism from over-exploited enterprises, are a few benefits of peripheral tourism. This study explores the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises in Goa and coping strategies employed therein. In the process, significant institutional arrangement and vulnerability context barriers encountered by peripheral tourism entrepreneurs are identified and examined. Policymakers, tourism authorities, and entrepreneurs seeking to promote sustainable tourism development in peripheral areas would find this study a valuable resource. Overall, this study sheds light on the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises and offers practical strategies to overcome these obstacles.

Methodology - The study adopts case study methodology. Five peripheral tourism units in Goa were selected for the study. The study involves a comprehensive literature review to understand the concepts of peripheral tourism, challenges and coping strategies. Additionally, literature review of the importance of social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism, social entrepreneurs, challenges entrepreneurs face in peripheral areas, Mintzberg's strategies, Resource Based View (RBV) theory and Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) were conducted. These three (Mintzberg's strategies, RBV theory and SLFT framework) formed the basis for academic analysis. Data of the units were collected through primary and secondary sources. In-depth interviews of the entrepreneurs and discussion with the employees and villagers formed a part of the primary resource. The transcripts of the interactions and interviews were analyzed through content analysis. Secondary data sources were the internet, organization websites, social media reports and reviews etc. Data interpretation and evaluation are based on the elements of the Mintzberg's strategy, RBV theory and SLFT framework,

Findings - The findings of this study disclose several challenges faced and provide coping strategies for tourism enterprises in Goa's peripheral tourism sector and similar

regions. Institutional arrangement challenges include local government mismanagement, corruption, lack of institutional support at peripheral and regional levels etc. Vulnerability context challenges comprise of destruction of natural resources, climate change hazards & resource degradation, Covid 19 etc. The findings also reveal that peripheral tourism can provide employment opportunities, alternative sources of income, and contribute to balanced regional economic development. In addition, social inclusion can be promoted by fostering cultural exchange between urban and peripheral tourism populations. Moreover, the burden on overexploited tourist enterprises can be alleviated by peripheral tourism, by diverting tourists to lesser-known areas with abundant resources.

Research Implications - This research contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into and furthering understanding of the specific challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises, particularly in the context of Goa. It highlights the importance of addressing the unique challenges faced and promoting sustainable and inclusive development. The study proposes SBFT, a multi-dimensional framework that integrates RBV, SLFT, and Mintzberg's strategic approaches to provide a holistic model for business sustainability in peripheral tourism. SBFT helps in identifying strategic resources, recognizing challenges arising from institutional arrangements and vulnerability contexts, and selecting appropriate strategies to sustain tourism enterprises.

Practical implications - This study provides useful insights for tourism entrepreneurs, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in the growth and management of peripheral tourism businesses. By linking theoretical concepts with real-world challenges, it offers practical guidance for promoting sustainable tourism in these regions. The research emphasizes the importance of managing resources effectively, choosing the right business strategies, understanding and working within government policies, strengthening community participation, planning for resilience, and applying the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT) to ensure long-term success.

Policy and Managerial Implications - This study highlights important policies and management strategies to help peripheral tourism businesses grow in a sustainable way. Governments can support these businesses by simplifying rules, offering incentives for eco-friendly practices, and strengthening institutional support. It is also important to encourage structured community involvement and develop crisis plans to protect businesses from unexpected challenges. On the management side, tourism entrepreneurs should focus on using resources wisely, creating multiple income sources, and working with government policies to ensure long-term success. Managing relationships within the community and preparing for crises can also improve business stability. By combining strong policies with smart management strategies, peripheral tourism businesses can become more resilient and competitive in a changing market.

Originality of the Study - This study introduces the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT), a unique model that combines Mintzberg's Strategy Framework, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, and the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT). Unlike previous studies that focus on these frameworks separately, SBFT integrates them to create a structured approach for business sustainability. The framework helps businesses identify strategic resources (RBV), choose the right strategies (Mintzberg), and ensure long-term sustainability (SLFT). It also emphasizes the need for adaptability, resource optimization, and resilience in changing markets. The case study approach validates SBFT in real-world tourism enterprises, proving its effectiveness. This research offers a practical and scalable model for business growth while contributing to strategic management literature.

Limitations - This study offers important insights into the sustainability of peripheral tourism businesses, but it has some limitations. The findings are based on a specific period and do not include long-term changes in these enterprises. However, despite this limitation, the study serves as a solid base for future research on sustainable business strategies in peripheral tourism.

Keywords: Peripheral tourism, Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism, Resource-Based View, Strategic resource management, Institutional arrangement barriers, Sustainable tourism strategies

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Tourism – an overview

Travelling to locations outside of one's normal surroundings for leisure, business, and other purposes (UNWTO, 2024) is all included in the complex phenomenon known as tourism (Gupta, 2024; Noroozi, 2020). Fundamentally, tourism is the investigation and enjoyment of many cultures, environments, and pursuits, fostering both individual growth and intercultural comprehension (Li et al., 2024; Recuero-Virto & Arróspide, 2024; Setiawan, 2023). Tourism, as an industry, holds significant importance in the global economy, contributing substantially to economic growth, job creation, and sustainable development (Li et al., 2017; Thommandru et al, 2023). In recent years, the tourism sector has experienced remarkable expansion, becoming one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2024), the global tourism industry was projected to contribute \$11.1 trillion to the world's GDP in 2024, accounting for 10% of the global economy. Additionally, the sector was expected to support nearly 348 million jobs worldwide, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by over 13.6 million jobs.

Traditionally, people travelled for reasons such as leisure, business, or cultural exploration. However, in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable increase in the desire to avoid crowded tourist destinations (Abbas et al, 2021; Jęczyżyk et al., 2023; Park et al., 2021; Zhang et al., 2023). Concerns about health and safety have prompted travellers to seek out quieter and less populated areas for their vacations (Jacobson et al., 2023; Rahman et al., 2021). As a response to this growing demand for secluded and off-the-beaten-path destinations, Peripheral Tourism has emerged as a new trend in the travel industry (Dinkoksung et al, 2023; Zhou, 2022). This form of tourism focuses on exploring the hinterlands and remote regions that are often overlooked by mainstream travellers (Mowforth & Munt, 2016; Reali, 2022). Instead of following the traditional tourist trails, peripheral tourists are drawn to places that offer unique experiences and a sense of tranquillity away from the crowds (Govers & Kumar, 2019; Soul Travelling, 2024).

1.2 Overview of Peripheral Tourism

Peripheral tourism is the practice of travelling to less well-known or remote areas (Barbato & De Gregorio, 2019), outside of the usual tourist destinations (Escalera-Reyes & Barbosa-Ramírez, 2020; Salvatore et al, 2018). It entails travelling to places that are outside the boundaries of well-known tourist locations (Govers et al., 2019; Paulino et al., 2021; Peters, 2020; Rudawska & Kuźmiński, 2021; Silva et al., 2019). These remote areas frequently have distinctive environmental (Aas et al., 2016; Huang & Mabon, 2021), historical (Butler, 2010), or cultural attractions (Duda, 2019; Getz, 2019) that draw a particular type of traveler interested in unique encounters (Mihalik et al., 2019) and off-the-beaten-path excursions (Smith, 2023). Regional development brought about by peripheral tourism also has the ability to draw tourists to these areas and produce economic advantages (Butler & Hinch, 2007; Govers et al., 2019). Peripheral tourism, according to Peters (2020), is "the development of tourism activities in peripheral regions, often characterized by their remote location, low population density, and limited accessibility, and where tourism is not the primary economic sector." Barbato and De Gregorio (2019) define "tourism activities taking place in peripheral regions, particularly in protected areas, aiming at attracting tourists and generating economic benefits while maintaining the environmental and cultural integrity of the destination", as peripheral tourism. Silva et al (2019), refer to the exploration of "less-visited regions that are located outside of mainstream tourist destinations and involves the discovery of unique cultural, historical, or natural attractions in these peripheral areas, offering traveller's alternative experiences and opportunities for authentic encounters with local communities" as peripheral tourism. According to Escalera-Reyes and Barbosa-Ramírez (2020), peripheral tourism, is the practice of travelling to and experiencing remote areas that are often less developed or visited by mainstream visitors. These areas have distinctive natural and cultural features that draw travelers looking for authentic experiences, enhancing the diversity and sustainability of the tourism industry.

As peripheral tourism encourages the exploration of remote and lesser-known regions, it creates opportunities for social entrepreneurs to establish ventures that not only offer unique experiences to travellers but also prioritize societal benefits such as community upliftment, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation (Porter

et al, 2017), for example the hornbill festival at Nagaland, Spiti Valley Tourism Circuit in Himachal Pradesh and Lapland Safaris of Finland.

Social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in peripheral tourism by fostering inclusive growth (Gursoy et al., 2020; Rana & Prakash, 2019), addressing local socio-economic challenges (Jain & Dasgupta, 2020; Jha et al., 2020), and ensuring that tourism benefits are equitably distributed among communities (Singh et al., 2020). Unlike conventional businesses, social enterprises in tourism prioritize long-term sustainability and community engagement, often reinvesting profits into local development projects (Filimonau et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020).

Given the increasing significance of social entrepreneurship in shaping the sustainable growth of peripheral tourism, it is essential to explore the ways in which these enterprises navigate challenges and create value for both travellers and host communities. The following section delves deeper into the intersection of peripheral tourism and social entrepreneurship.

1.2.1 Peripheral tourism and social entrepreneurs

Barbato and De Gregorio (2019) define peripheral tourism as “tourism activities taking place in peripheral regions, particularly in protected areas, aiming at attracting tourists and generating economic benefits while maintaining the environmental and cultural integrity of the destination”

Peripheral tourism entrepreneurs refer to individuals or businesses operating in remote or peripheral regions that engage in tourism-related activities (Castanho et al., 2023; Leita et al., 2022; Qu & Zollet, 2023). The enterprises they operate are relatively small in size and scale and often classified as micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). These enterprises operate in remote or peripheral regions and are crucial for sustainable tourism development (Condon, 2004; Martinez et al., 2024). The entrepreneurs running these small enterprises generally have societal benefits in mind, alongside economic considerations (Hall et al., 2005; Sharpley & Telfer, 2014). Research defines the entrepreneurs, who tackle economic, social and environmental challenges in communities in peripheral areas (Barbieri & Mahoney, 2019; Ritzer, 2019;); promote local development, preserve culture, protect the environment

(Gassner & Friedl, 2021; Radu & Chiriac, 2019) and involve local participation (Ritzer, 2019) as social entrepreneurs. Reducing poverty, empowering communities, and promoting sustainable development are some of the contributions made by social entrepreneurs in peripheral regions (Musinguzi et al., 2023; Pradhan et al., 2022; Suriyankietkaew et al., 2022).

This research focuses on five entities that represent Peripheral tourism enterprises, each exemplifying cases of social entrepreneurship.

However peripheral tourism-based businesses are fraught with challenges and there is very little dedicated study on the coping strategies adopted by entrepreneurs to mitigate these challenges (Bhattarai & Prompanyo, 2021; Hallak et al., 2022; Ioannides & Peterson, 2003; Jalil et al., 2021). This is an area which needs committed research by academicians, business fraternity and non-governmental organizations (Brown & Davis, 2019; Lee & Park, 2021).

1.3 Examining Challenges and Coping Strategies in Peripheral Tourism

Challenges refer to difficulties, barriers, or obstacles that hinder the achievement of goals or objectives in a particular context (Healy & Perry, 2000). These challenges can arise due to internal factors, such as organizational limitations or lack of resources (Brown & Green, 2019), or external factors, such as socio-economic (Garcia & Thompson, 2022), political (Robbins & Judge, 2017), environmental (Wang & Liu, 2021), or technological constraints (Smith & Lee, 2020).

Coping strategies are the diverse methods, techniques, or approaches that individuals, groups, or organizations employ to manage, mitigate, or adapt to stressors (Smith & Doe, 2022), adversities, or unfavourable conditions (Zhang & Wang, 2019). These strategies can be categorized into problem-focused approaches, which aim to address the source of stress, and emotion-focused approaches, which aim to regulate emotional responses to stress (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2020). Effective coping strategies enhance resilience, facilitate psychological well-being, and improve the ability to navigate complex and challenging situations (Miller & Thompson, 2021).

Issues such as limited accessibility (Barbara et al, 2022; Zafran & Kaufmann, 2022), poor infrastructure (Connor et al, 2022) , seasonality (Zeng et al., 2022) , socio-

economic gaps (Spencer et al., 2023) , disputes between stakeholders (Puig-Cabrera et al, 2022), and capacity limitations (Bhutia et al., 2022) are some of the challenges that impede the viability of peripheral tourism initiatives.

Some of the strategies for coping the above challenges include community involvement (Hussain et al, 2022; Mahajan et al, 2022), capacity building (Cooke et al., 2022), and sustainable resource management (Fazal et al, 2022; Kim et al., 2022).

The above literature proves that there is a need for dedicated research in the area of peripheral tourism. Also, existing literature reveals a significant research gap, as the majority of studies have predominantly focused on the demand side, with relatively little attention given to the supply side (Duan et al, 2020; Kumar & Shekhar, 2020). This gap is particularly pronounced in the context of emerging economies, such as India, where supply-side dynamics remain underexplored. (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021)

This thesis aims to contribute by consolidating the extant knowledge of theoretical frameworks such as Resource Based View (RBV) and Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) to the five case studies. Incorporating Mintzberg's emergent and deliberate strategies framework enriches the analysis of the five case studies by providing a nuanced understanding of how strategic decisions are made and implemented in real-world organizational contexts (Mintzberg, 1978).

Mintzberg's strategies -The examination of challenges and coping mechanisms in Peripheral tourism enterprises reveals a multifaceted approach involving both spontaneous and planned strategies. Peripheral destinations heavily rely on their resources as essential elements of their tourist offerings, forming a crucial aspect of their strategic positioning. Mintzberg's distinction between deliberate, emergent and ad hoc strategies in strategic management offers insight into how strategies evolve and are implemented within organizational settings (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg, 1994).

The Resource Base View (RBV) theory provides a theoretical framework for understanding the competitive advantage of Peripheral tourism enterprises (Buhalis & Williams, 1998). This theory suggests that the availability and effective utilisation of unique resources and capabilities are essential for achieving sustainable competitive

advantage (Mailani et al., 2024). In the context of peripheral tourism, RBV theory emphasises the significance of identifying and leveraging the distinctive natural, cultural, and social resources that differentiate peripheral regions from other destinations (Gössling et al., 2013). The RBV theory promotes strategic resource allocation, including the use of human, financial, and social capital, to raise the competitiveness and allure of peripheral destinations (Hall & Williams, 2008; Kim et al., 2013; Nunkoo et al., 2013)

Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the complex interactions between tourism, livelihoods, and sustainable development in peripheral regions (Hall & Gossling, 2019; Huang et al., 2022; Jamal & Getz, 2019). This framework acknowledges that tourism can both positively and negatively impact local livelihoods, and it aims to promote strategies that maximizes the benefits while minimizing negative impacts (Rashid, 2020).

This research also proposes a comprehensive framework that helps the user, an academician, policy makers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders, evaluate a business considering the resources strategically important for them and recognising the challenges they shall experience and the best strategies to cope with these challenges.

1.4 Research Setting – Peripheral areas of Goa.

1.4.1 Goa – An Overview

Goa, located on the western coast of India, is renowned as a popular tourist destination due to its picturesque beaches, lush green vegetation, vibrant nightlife, diverse culture, and rich history. It is the smallest state in India in terms of area and the fourth-smallest in terms of population (Goa Government, 2023). With an area of 1,429 square miles (3,702 square km), Goa stretches approximately 105 km from north to south and 60 km from east to west. Goa is known for its unique blend of Indian and Portuguese influences, stemming from its colonial past. As of March 2025, the estimated population of Goa is 15.90 Lakhs (Goa Population, 2025).

1.4.2 Importance of Tourism in Goa

The tourism industry plays a vital role in the Goan economy, contributing to employment and revenue generation with a significant portion of the state's population being directly or indirectly dependent on it for their livelihoods (Economic Survey- Government of Goa, 2020-21). The influx of tourists to Goa began in the late 1960s, with the arrival of hippie travellers seeking an alternative and laid-back lifestyle. Since then, tourism has grown substantially, from 7.75 lakhs in 1985 to 80.64 lakhs in 2019 (Economic Survey, 2022-23), attracting a diverse range of tourists, including beach lovers, adventure enthusiasts, history buffs, and partygoers. COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on tourist arrivals, with only 32.58 lakh domestic and 4 lakh foreign tourists recorded in 2020 and 33.08 lakh domestic and 0.22 lakh foreign tourists in 2021 (Tourism Statistics, 2022). CEIC (2024) noted that post pandemic, the state again witnessed a surge in tourism with 70.12 lakh domestic and 1.75 lakh foreign tourists in 2022. The Government of Goa has declared tourism an industry in the state. Annual foreign exchange receipts from the tourism sector in Goa are currently estimated to the extent of Rs. 600 crores (Tourism Policy- Govt of Goa, 2022). The non-tax revenue receipts from tourism in the economic services sector of Goa have shown significant growth, increasing from INR 83.21 million in 2021 to INR 153.510 million in 2023 (CEIC, 2025). Furthermore, the projected non-tax revenue receipts for 2024 and 2025 are estimated to remain at INR 153.510 million and rise to INR 295 million, respectively (CEIC, 2025). The following table and figure illustrate these trends.

Table 0.1 Goa Non-Tax Revenue Receipts (INR Mn) in Tourism

Year	Non-Tax Revenue Receipts (INR million)
2021	83.210
2022	118.500
2023	153.510
2024	153.510
2025	295.000

Source: CEIC, 2024

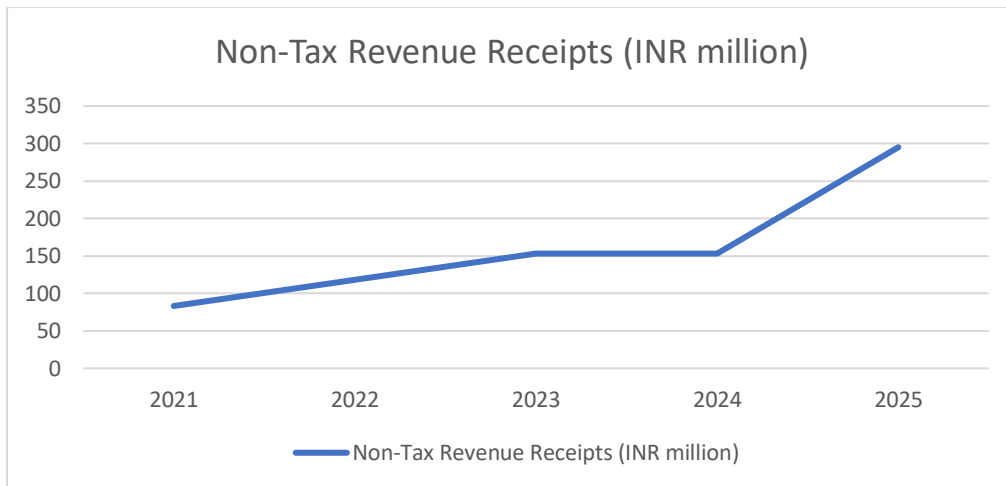


Figure 0.1 Goa Non-Tax Revenue Receipts (INR Mn) in Tourism

Source: CEIC, 2024

1.4.3 Peripheral areas of Goa

Goa's peripheral areas are a less-travelled aspect of the state that lies beyond the well-known tourist destinations. These hinterlands/peripheral regions provide a different experience from the busy beach towns and highlight an alternative aspect of Goa's cultural and natural history. These regions with its distinguished picturesque landscape, charming towns, paddy fields, tranquil backwaters and rolling hills give visitors the chance to get away from the throng and enjoy Goa in a more serene and genuine way. Visitors can also engage with people, observe traditional jobs like farming and fishing, and learn more about the agrarian lifestyle that has long been an important aspect of Goan culture in these peripheral areas.

Some of the peripheral attractions in Goa include the backwaters of Goa, particularly in areas like Aldona and Chorao. These serene rivers are ideal for boat trips, birdwatching, and exploring the distinctive mangrove habitat. The lush mangrove forests not only provide crucial natural habitats but also chances for eco-tourism, where travellers can partake in eco-friendly pursuits like kayaking and nature walks. The wildlife sanctuaries in these peripheral regions- viz Mollem National Park and the Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary are home to many different types of plants and animals, including elusive species like the black panther. These protected regions give nature lovers the opportunity to go on exciting jungle safaris, trekking journeys, and bird-spotting excursions.

As mentioned in the above literature; despite their distinctive features, these peripheral regions, face particular difficulties that limit their potential as tourist destinations. There are 5883 small hotels in the villages of Goa with room capacity ranging from 1 to 50. A few corporate outlets in the hinterlands viz Jw. Marriot Goa – Vagator (151 rooms), W. Goa – Anjuna (109 rooms), Sun Village Resorts Pvt Ltd – Arpora, Goa (135 rooms), Riviera de Goa Resorts and Hotels Pvt Ltd – Arpora, Goa (104 rooms) and a few more are exceptions to this (DOT – Govt of Goa, 2023). The profitability of tourist projects in these places in Goa is hampered by problems such as restricted accessibility, inadequate infrastructure, seasonality, socio-economic gaps, disputes between stakeholders, and capacity restrictions. As observed in the literature earlier some of the coping mechanisms to lessen their effects include community involvement, capacity building, and sustainable resource management. A more inclusive and sustainable strategy can result from encouraging the active involvement of local communities in tourist planning and development. Initiatives to create capacity, such as training courses and skill development, can help stakeholders and business owners manage tourism operations more successfully. Additionally, implementing sustainable resource management practices guarantees the protection of these peripheral areas' natural and cultural resources for future generations.

1.5 Rationale for the Research

1.5.1 Research Background

Previous research and interactions with entrepreneurs involved in peripheral tourism during a prior M.Phil. study revealed that these entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in operating their businesses. It was observed that the coping strategies adopted by these entrepreneurs were primarily reactive measures to the challenges they encountered (Mahatme et al., 2019; Mintzberg, 1978). This highlighted the need for conducting in depth research on peripheral tourism in India, as there are limited studies specifically addressing the challenges and coping strategies faced by entrepreneurs in this field (Ioannides & Peterson, 2003; Jalil et al., 2021).

1.5.2 Previous Research on Peripheral Tourism

Previous studies have explored the role of tourism in peripheral areas and the potential benefits it can bring to underdeveloped regions. Brown and Hall (2000) discussed the case studies of tourism in peripheral areas, emphasizing the importance of sustainable tourism development in fragile regions. Several studies emphasize that tourism serves as a means of economic development for underdeveloped peripheral regions, leading to job creation, capital inflow, and overall improvement in the welfare of the peripheral population (Hohl & Tisdell, 1995; Sharpley, 2002). Kumar and Shekhar (2020) highlighted the potential advantages of peripheral tourism development, such as employment opportunities, alternative sources of income, balanced regional economic growth, social inclusion, and the ability to alleviate pressure on overexploited destinations.

1.5.3 Research Gap and Objectives

Despite the potential advantages of peripheral tourism, entrepreneurship in this sector is fraught with challenges. It is evident that peripheral tourism enterprises face various problems related to finance, marketing, management, and human resources (Jayadatta, 2017). However, there is a dearth of comprehensive research focusing on the challenges and coping strategies specifically encountered by peripheral tourism enterprises. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to understand the challenges faced and the coping strategies adopted by peripheral tourism enterprises in the light of Mintzberg's strategies, the RBV theory, and the SLFT framework. By addressing this research gap, this dissertation aims to contribute academically and managerially to the field of peripheral tourism.

1.6 Scope of the Research

This study focuses on understanding the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises and the coping strategies they adopt. It aims to provide valuable insights into the unique context of peripheral tourism in Goa, examining key aspects such as financial management, marketing strategies, human resource challenges, and overall business sustainability. Given the limited research on peripheral tourism from the suppliers' perspective, this study adopts an in-depth qualitative approach,

including interviews, to bridge this gap and contribute meaningfully to both academic research and industry practice.

Furthermore, this research proposes a comprehensive framework that enables academicians, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and other stakeholders to assess tourism enterprises by identifying strategically important resources, recognizing potential challenges, and determining the most effective strategies to overcome them. By doing so, the study aims to offer practical and theoretical contributions that support the sustainable growth of peripheral tourism enterprises.

1.7 Organization of Chapters

Chapter 1. This chapter begins with an overview and importance of tourism in Goa. Rationale for the research discusses the research background, previous research in peripheral tourism and research gap & objectives. The scope of the dissertation and organization of the chapters is presented towards the end.

Chapter 2. This chapter presents a comprehensive literature review, offering the theoretical foundation for the research conducted. It encompasses an examination of relevant literature on various topics, including peripheral tourism, importance of social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism, social entrepreneurs, challenges entrepreneurs face in peripheral tourism, coping strategies, Mintzberg's strategies, the 'Resource Base View' (RBV) theory, and the 'Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism' (SLFT). The chapter is concluded by identifying gaps using Miles's taxonomy, proposition of a new framework – the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT) and placement of Research Questions, Objectives and Propositions.

Chapter 3. Research methodology adopted for the study is covered here. There is a brief discussion and rationale behind the use of case study methodology for the research. Data collection and analysis used for the study is further explained.

Chapter 4. Chapter four enumerates a detailed narrative of the five real life case studies using the variables of Resource Based View theory.

Chapter 5. This chapter includes the analysis of each individual case using the SLFT framework and discussion on the research findings.

Chapter 6. This chapter includes a cross-case analysis of the five cases.

Chapter 7. Chapter seven discusses the cross-case findings of the study and conclusions

Chapter 8. This chapter discusses the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations and avenues for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The theoretical foundation for the literature on peripheral tourism conducted in chapter 1 (section 1.1, page 1) is presented through a comprehensive literature review in this chapter. Relevant literature on various topics discussed in chapter 1 are explained at length here viz - social entrepreneurs (section 1.2.1, page 3), challenges (section 1.3, page 4) and coping strategies (section 1.3, page 4). Theoretical frameworks used to analyze the five case studies of this research, which were touched upon briefly in chapter 1 - viz Mintzberg's strategies (section 1.3, page 5), the 'Resource Base View' (RBV) theory (section 1.3, page 5), and the 'Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism' (SLFT) (section 1.3, page 6) are further examined in this chapter. At the end of the chapter the research gaps are mapped and presented using Miles's taxonomy followed by the research questions.

The literature on peripheral tourism explores the phenomenon of tourism development in geographically distant regions from major urban centers or traditional tourist destinations. It delves into the unique natural, cultural, or historical resources that attract tourists to these peripheral areas. Scholars have investigated the impacts of peripheral tourism on local communities, its economic benefits, environmental sustainability, and social dynamics. Emphasis is placed on understanding the distinct characteristics of peripheral regions, such as their remote location, limited infrastructure, and cultural heritage, to effectively manage and promote tourism in these areas.

The literature on social entrepreneurs discusses different types of entrepreneurs in tourism and the importance of social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism. Also, in the context of tourism, the study focuses on individuals or organizations driven by a social mission to address community challenges and foster positive social, economic and environmental change. These social entrepreneurs play a vital role in the development and implementation of sustainable tourism practices in peripheral regions and are recognized for their ability to leverage tourism for poverty alleviation, community empowerment, and sustainable development.

Challenges associated with peripheral tourism are identified in the literature, including limited accessibility, inadequate infrastructure, seasonality, dependence on external markets, and cultural and environmental impacts. Additionally, socio-economic disparities, lack of skills and capacity, and conflicts among stakeholders pose significant hurdles to the success of peripheral tourism initiatives. Coping strategies proposed by researchers and practitioners encompass community engagement and empowerment, capacity building, diversification of tourism products and markets, sustainable resource management, and the integration of local knowledge and cultural values into tourism development. Context-specific approaches that consider the unique characteristics and needs of each peripheral region are emphasized.

Mintzberg's strategies - When we look at the problems and solutions in places like peripheral tourism spots, we see that they use a mix of different approaches, both ones that just happen and ones they plan out. These places depend a lot on what they have to offer tourists, like their natural beauty or cultural attractions. Mintzberg's ideas about how strategies can either come about on their own or be planned out help us understand how these places make decisions and carry them out (Mintzberg, 1978).

The 'Resource Base View' (RBV) theory (Barney, 1995; Peteraf, 1993) provides a theoretical framework for understanding the competitive advantage of Peripheral tourism enterprises. According to this theory, the availability and effective utilization of unique resources and capabilities are crucial for achieving sustainable competitive advantage. In the context of peripheral tourism, RBV theory highlights the significance of identifying and leveraging the distinctive natural, cultural, and social resources that differentiate peripheral regions from other destinations.

'Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism' (SLFT) offers a comprehensive approach to comprehending the intricate interactions between tourism, livelihoods, and sustainable development in peripheral regions (Shen et al., 2008). This framework acknowledges the potential positive and negative impacts of tourism on local livelihoods, aiming to promote strategies that maximize benefits while minimizing negative consequences. The SLFT offers guidance for sustainable tourism development that ensures the well-being and resilience of local communities.

2.1 Peripheral Tourism

2.1.1 Definition

Peripheral tourism is defined as the development of tourism activities in peripheral regions (Barbato & De Gregorio, 2019; Escalera-Reyes & Barbosa-Ramírez, 2020; Govers et al., 2019; Peters, 2020; Rudawska & Kuźmiński, 2021; Silva et al., 2019), often characterized by their remote location (Filimonau et al., 2019; Novelli & Gössling, 2019), low population density (Mihalič et al., 2020; Sigala & Gretzel, 2021), limited accessibility (Buhalis & Foerste, 2019; Šimková & Hruška, 2021) and where tourism is not the primary economic sector (Martínez-Galarraga & Tirado-Fabregat, 2021; Peters, 2020). It involves visiting less-explored regions (Perri & Petti, 2015) with distinct natural landscapes (Butler & Hinch, 2007), cultural heritage (D'Arcy & Deveau, 2012), and local traditions, offering tourists a unique and authentic experience (Hall & Page, 2020; Russo & Richards, 2020). Tourism in a peripheral area, known as peripheral tourism or alternative tourism or off-the-beaten-path tourism, has the potential to offer unique and authentic experiences away from mainstream tourist destinations (Aas et al., 2016; Butler, 2010; Getz, 2019; Mihalik et al., 2019). It offers a means to diversify tourism experiences, alleviate over tourism, and foster sustainable regional development in peripheral areas (Hall & Page, 2020).

Peripheral tourism enterprises being close to commercial tourism centers is a common feature in smaller geographical areas. This means that these destinations are nearby each other, making it easy for tourists to visit both types of locations without traveling long distances (Flognfeldt, 2005; Kadar & Gede, 2021).

In contrast to numerous tourist destinations across India, peripheral destinations within Goa exhibit a geographical proximity to areas renowned for commercial tourism activities, notably leisure pursuits such as beach tourism. This unique geographical feature allows tourists the convenience of day trips to peripheral destinations while lodging in urban accommodations, typically returning to their city-based hotels by evening. Also, in small states like Goa, peripheral tourism and rural tourism can often be used interchangeably, as peripheral tourism forms the essence of rural tourism. In such situations, the unique natural and cultural aspects of

peripheral areas are the main focus for rural tourism development efforts (Mahatme et al, 2019).

A few similar cases like Goa in other parts of India which have peripheral destinations close to commercial tourism hotspots include the backwaters of Kerala, with destinations like Alleppey (Alappuzha) and Kumarakom, which offer serene rural experiences with traditional houseboat cruises, village walks, and interactions with local communities. These areas are close to popular beach destinations like Kovalam and Varkala. Shimla and Manali too are similar cases here which are popular hill stations known for their scenic beauty and adventure activities; and they are also surrounded by rural areas like villages of Tirthan Valley and Sangla Valley offering opportunities for eco-tourism, trekking, and village experiences. Darjeeling in West Bengal is famous for its tea gardens, colonial architecture, and panoramic views of the Himalayas. Its nearby rural areas like Kalimpong and Mirik offer tranquil retreats with opportunities for nature walks, tea estate visits, and interactions with local communities. This distinction delineates peripheral tourism in Goa, Kerala, Shimla, Manali and Darjeeling from analogous practices observed in other regions of India (authors own research).

A few similar destinations outside India are a) Ubud and Kuta in Bali, Indonesia. Ubud is a cultural and rural destination known for its lush landscapes, rice terraces, and traditional arts. It is located inland in Bali, while Kuta is a popular beach destination known for its vibrant nightlife and surfing opportunities. Despite their differences, Ubud and Kuta are within approximately 20 kilometres of each other. b) Cannes, located on the French Riviera, is renowned for its glamorous film festival and upscale lifestyle. While Cannes itself is a prominent commercial and tourist hub, there are several peripheral destinations nearby that offer contrasting experiences within a short distance such as 'Grasse' known as the perfume capital of the world, located approximately 16 kilometres from Cannes. It offers visitors the opportunity to explore historic perfume factories, learn about the fragrance-making process, and stroll through fields of blooming flowers. Another scenic island, Île Sainte-Marguerite is situated just off the coast of Cannes, accessible by a short boat ride and is known for its natural beauty, tranquil beaches, and a historic fort (authors own research).

Peripheral tourism enterprises being close to commercial tourism centers is a common feature in smaller geographical areas. This means that these destinations are nearby each other, making it easy for tourists to visit both types of locations without traveling long distances (Flognfeldt, 2005; Kadar & Gede, 2021).

2.1.2 Challenges and Coping Strategies

Challenges - In a general sense, a challenge can be defined as a difficult or demanding situation or obstacle that requires effort, skill, or determination to overcome or navigate successfully (Merriam-Webster. (n.d.); Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.).) To achieve a desired outcome out of a challenge, it often requires individuals or groups to stretch their abilities, employ problem-solving skills, and demonstrate resilience. Challenges can be encountered in various domains, such as personal endeavours, professional settings, academic pursuits, or competitive environments. The concept of a challenge is deeply rooted in psychology and motivation theory. It is associated with the concept of flow, which refers to a state of optimal engagement and enjoyment when individuals are fully immersed in an activity that matches their skills and presents an appropriate level of difficulty (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

Some of the challenges faced by peripheral destinations include accessibility issues, market visibility, capacity constraints and seasonality (Scott et al., 2020). *Peripheral tourism ventures in India face several challenges*, including lack of access to finance and capital (Jain & Dasgupta, 2020; Jha et al., 2020), which limits their ability to scale up or sustain operations (Sood & Jha, 2019); lack of awareness and understanding of entrepreneurship among local communities (Poon et al., 2012) and stakeholders (Gursoy et al., 2020; Kumar & Singh, 2019); inadequate infrastructure such as roads, transportation, and communication facilities (Mishra et al., 2019); and limited market access (Sinha & Kumar, 2019).

Pestle is used to effectively categorize the challenges faced by Peripheral tourism enterprises in a structured manner. PESTLE helps analyze challenges across Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, and Environmental dimensions, ensuring no key factor is overlooked. This framework is particularly useful because Peripheral tourism enterprises are influenced by diverse external forces—such as policy constraints, financial limitations, socio-cultural dynamics, and infrastructure

inadequacies—that interact in complex ways. By categorizing challenges through PESTLE, we can better understand their root causes and devise tailored strategies for sustainable development.

Political and Legal Challenges: Shrestha and Decosta (2021) identified lack of education of the government officials – technically and otherwise of the local level operations whilst developing dynamic capabilities for community collaboration and tourism product innovation in response to crisis as a significant challenge. Giddy et al. (2022) studied that, issues of the local government mismanagement and corruption, constrained expansion of rural tourism firms in the covid-19 environment in South Africa. Zafran and Kaufmann (2022) through a case study of farm tourism development in Lika - Croatia, identified, that due to the peripherality of these farms there was lack of institutional support of government at the rural (micro) & regional (meso) level. Likewise lack of mutual interdependence between unskilled entrepreneurs with low administrative capabilities and inadequate institutions hinders implementation of new policies for rural development, observes Papamichail et al. (2024).

Environmental Challenges: Mahatme et al (2019) identify destruction of natural resources as an environmental challenge in peripheral tourism. Santos et al (2022) analysed pilot projects of creative tourism in an ultra-peripheral region and felt there is excessive pressure on land and its limited natural resources there. Smith et al. (2022) studied the impacts of tourism on coastal areas and observed that exposing coastal regions to multiple pressures led to climate change hazards and resource degradation

Social Challenges: Mottiar et al. (2018) researched that peripheral rural areas face significant challenges in terms of sustaining communities and attracting tourists. Scheyvens and Cheer (2021) noted that community participation was missing in many peripheral tourism ventures. They observed that the extractive nature of other participants viz – tourism industries and governments hindered implementation of sustainable development goals (SDG's) in the region. Diaz Rocca and Zielinski (2022) through their case study of Minca, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia analysed that with no access to knowledge of tourism businesses, training and investment i.e., lack of social capital within communities led to sale of land to outsiders. Similarly,

Scorza and Gatto (2023) identified abandonment and depopulation of tourism settlements by locals as a serious social challenge. This emerged through their case study of Calabrian Greek area and its sustainability.

Technological Challenges: Masiero and Hrankai (2022) observed the absence of comprehensive in-vehicle information displayed on the monitors of transportation units, coupled with them being non-user friendly as a considerable obstacle for tourists venturing into peripheral regions. Melgaco (2022) presented the digital divide in the ICT access, connectivity and knowledge of the same in the rural and urban tourism areas through his book chapter – ‘Digital Peripheries: Internet and Socio-spatial Practices in the Rururban’. Torre (2022) too quoted poor ICT infrastructure, low internet connectivity and lack of digital skills as challenges in the ‘smart development’ of peripheral areas.

Economic Challenges: Suthanaya and Suwarningsih (2023) through their case study of Bali province-Indonesia identified challenges of low accessibility to the tourism location and limited road capacity leading to low economies in the region. Fusté-Forné (2022) through their study on the seasonality of wild foods in peripheral areas found that few restaurants were allowed to participate in the food festival of the authentic seasonal crop which hampered percolation of the economic benefits to the populace of the entire region. Over tourism too affected the climate and reduction in crop produce. Challenge of economic and environmental sustainability in protected areas were presented by Malkowski et al. (2022) through their study on the development of protected areas in the Pomerania Euroregion. Yang and Wall (2022) identified lack of proper planning, ineffective management and inadequate financial resources as hindrances to heritage tourism leading to low economic returns to the peripheral areas of China.

Coping Strategies - Coping strategies refer to the specific efforts, both behavioural and psychological, that people employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events.

A few of the **Coping Strategies** adopted in response to the above-mentioned challenges identified through PESTLE are as follows – For the political and legal challenge; there needs to be proper Government policies viz; political will and legal prospects in place that will help community participation in tourism development.

Ensure community participation, bottom-up decision making and inclusive growth to achieve government-rural populace synergy (Shrestha & Decosta, 2021). Zafran and Kaufmann (2022) observe that government participation looked at to help local entrepreneurs participate in the case studied. There is also a suggestion of replacing the features of the existing institutions or creating new ones, rather than slow and gradual adaptation to the same (Papamichail et al., 2024).

When addressing environmental challenges in the context of tourism, Mahatme et al. (2019) propose heightened awareness and sensitivity among both operators and tourists to stick to established paths. This approach helps prevent trampling and the destruction of natural resources. Santos et al. (2022) suggests that the active support and participation of various institutions, such as regional governments, local authorities, and similar bodies, is crucial. By working together, these entities can mitigate the negative impacts associated with mass tourism. Furthermore, Smith et al. (2022), in their comprehensive literature review, emphasize the importance of implementing a coastal zone regulatory management system. Such a system plays a key role in preventing excessive extraction of natural resources, ensuring their long-term preservation.

Regarding societal challenges, several scholars have put forth coping strategies. Mottiar et al. (2018) acknowledge that while social entrepreneurs may face limitations in scaling up their efforts to bring about significant change in peripheral sites, their localized operations and gradual growth still contribute positively to society. This approach ensures sustainable change at a manageable pace. Despite the complexities surrounding partnerships in tourism, including legal frameworks and governance arrangements, constructive collaborations between all stakeholders, including the community, government, and tourism industry, are crucial for effectively implementing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2021). Diaz Rocca and Zielinski (2022) highlight the importance of community-based tourism (CBT) with strong social capital in achieving sustainable objectives in peripheral tourism. Furthermore, Scorza and Gatto (2023) propose public support programs tailored to the skills and resources available to residents in depopulated areas. These programs can include micro-entrepreneurship initiatives, specific professional training, and technical and scientific support for social groups engaged in the revitalization of these locations.

Maseiro and Hrankai (2022) propose several measures to address technological challenges, including the implementation of electronic monitors featuring prominently displayed maps indicating the directions to connecting transportation options while presenting only essential information. Additionally, they recommend providing tourists with verbal in-vehicle announcements to alert them of arrivals at various attractions. Furthermore, the authors emphasize the importance of user-friendly monitors that allow users to have control over the information displayed. Melgaco (2022) offers an unusual finding in her academic inquiry into three remote places studied in Brazil and the UK. She specifically notes that, in terms of access to internet connectivity, these regions blur the traditional distinction between rural and urban sectors. Because of their distinct fusion of rural and urban traits, some academic scholars refer to these communities as "rururban" areas. The importance of connectivity and information technology (IT), combined with digital skills, as key drivers for rural area development are highlighted by Torre (2022). As a result, it is crucial to have policies in place that promote and improve the technology and digital skills of both employers and employees.

Suthanaya and Suwarningsih (2023) suggest a variety of coping mechanisms to overcome the economic difficulties faced in the Indonesian region of Bali. To increase accessibility to the rural areas, they recommend a dual-pronged strategy that includes developing local tourism attractions and enhancing transportation infrastructure. The challenge of narrow width of highways and their complicated and steep alignments of the land transportation system have been alleviated through numerous shortcut routes. In future, the authors suggest widening the existing roads or creating new alternative ones. Fuste-Forne (2022) proposes a set of strategies aimed at addressing the economic challenges encountered in the Catalan Pyrenees. Through the extension of the number of restaurants and the diversification of their menus to cover the full month, these efforts aim to increase the variety of dining options. Such actions would greatly boost the revenue that restaurants bring in, which would have a greater economic influence on the area as a whole. Additionally, the effective management of forests emerges as a critical concern in mitigating the challenges posed by over tourism, climate change, crop production, and the overall economy of the region. Malkowski et al. (2022) propose the necessity of fostering cooperation among diverse stakeholders, including local authorities, non-

governmental organizations (NGOs), actors within the tourism industry, educational institutions, and local leaders. Such collaboration is deemed crucial for safeguarding the protected areas and simultaneously ensuring their economic and environmental sustainability. The authors advocate for comprehensive training programs aimed at equipping these stakeholders with the knowledge and skills pertaining to sustainable tourism practices. Furthermore, the implementation of a series of promotional activities utilizing a range of tools is highlighted as one among several coping strategies recommended by the authors to effectively promote sustainable tourism. Yang and Wall (2022) recommend adaptive planning, with greater community participation and higher collaboration among stakeholders, to achieve overall balanced development.

Researchers quote that, emerging opportunities, such as technological advancements (Getz, 2019), alternative accommodation options (viz home stays) (Buckley, 2021; Font et al., 2022), and the growing demand for unique, immersive (Chen et al., 2020; Gursoy et al., 2020; Mihalic et al., 2019; Sigala, 2021) and authentic experiences (Butler, 2010; Jamal & Robinson, 2009; Urry et al., 2020) can help develop peripheral destinations into viable tourism hotspots. Care however has to be exhibited to embrace sustainable strategies. The strategies to develop peripheral destinations as viable sustainable tourism options requires planning and collaboration among its various stakeholders. Some of the strategies and approaches suggested by researchers include community-based tourism (Hall & Page, 2014; Khoo & Dzisi, 2019), sustainable tourism practices (Ribeiro et al., 2021), destination branding (Guerreiro et al., 2020), effective & innovative marketing initiatives (Aas et al., 2016; Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2019; Leal et al., 2021) and stakeholder engagement (Filimonau et al., 2020; Hall & Page, 2020).

Choice of social entrepreneurship as a form of business organization at a peripheral tourism destination, at least at the initial stage is also a strategy to cope with challenges (authors research). Social entrepreneurs address challenges of peripheral tourism enterprises by increasing the involvement of local communities in the design and implementation of tourism initiatives (Gursoy et al., 2020; Rana & Prakash, 2019); leveraging technology and digital platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and mobile applications to promote ventures and facilitate stakeholder collaboration (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2019; Singh & Verma, 2020); and developing innovative business models that capitalize on the unique resources and

capabilities of local communities to create differentiated tourism products and services (Singh et al., 2020). By addressing critical barriers and fostering resilience, social entrepreneurship not only enables ventures to thrive in challenging environments but also contributes to the sustainable development of peripheral tourism.

Research scholars recommend case studies from different peripheral destinations around the world to learn about strategies and practices adopted by them (Aas et al., 2016; Hall & Page, 2014; Reid et al., 2020). Context-specific strategies are also revealed through such studies (Filimonau et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020). It has been noted that social entrepreneurship plays a significant role in the reduction of poverty, community empowerment, and long-term sustainability of the destination in peripheral tourism units. Innovation, teamwork, and policy development are all significantly impacted by social entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism. Researchers can enhance information and encourage inclusive practices in these places by comprehending the function and effects of social entrepreneurship in these marginal areas. To study the same, a literature review on different types of entrepreneurship in the tourism industry and the importance of Social Entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism is attempted below.

2.2 Entrepreneurship in the tourism industry

Entrepreneurship within the tourism industry encompasses various forms of ventures and initiatives that contribute to the development and sustainability of tourism destinations. Scholars have extensively studied different types of entrepreneurship in this sector, highlighting their roles, challenges, and impacts.

Traditional Entrepreneurship: Traditional entrepreneurship in the tourism industry refers to business ventures that primarily focus on generating financial profit by catering to the needs of tourists. These ventures often include small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) such as family-owned businesses in rural tourism, agri-tourism, homestays, and other forms of accommodations and tourist services (Ghaderi & Henderson, 2012; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Ramli et al., 2022). The primary goal of traditional entrepreneurship is economic gain, and the emphasis is placed on maximizing operational efficiency, meeting market demand, and ensuring customer satisfaction. While these ventures may inadvertently support local economies and

cultural preservation, their main orientation is profit-driven, with limited focus on broader social or environmental objectives.

Innovative Entrepreneurship: This type of entrepreneurship involves leveraging emerging technologies and innovations to create new tourism products and services. Examples include e-entrepreneurship, the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in tourism, and the integration of sustainability practices with technology-driven solutions (Oumlil & Juiz, 2018; Varotsis, 2022; Xu et al, 2022).

Social Entrepreneurship: Social entrepreneurship in the tourism sector, in contrast, explicitly integrates social and environmental objectives with economic goals. It focuses on using innovative approaches within sustainable tourism practices to address social challenges, foster economic growth, and promote environmental conservation, especially in less-developed or marginalized areas (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010; Solvoll et al., 2015). Social entrepreneurs prioritize creating shared value by ensuring that the benefits of tourism extend to local communities through employment, capacity building, and preservation of cultural and natural heritage. Unlike traditional entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs measure success not only in financial terms but also by the positive social and environmental impacts their ventures generate.

Out of the above categories, social entrepreneurship stands out as the most suitable form of entrepreneurship for peripheral tourism due to its inherent focus on addressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges while fostering sustainable development and community empowerment.

2.2.1 Social Entrepreneurship

In the context of Peripheral tourism enterprises, which often face economic marginalization, cultural commodification, and environmental vulnerabilities, social entrepreneurship offers a holistic approach that aligns with the needs and aspirations of local communities (Moscardo et al., 2013).

One of the primary reasons why social entrepreneurship is the best form of entrepreneurship for peripheral tourism is its commitment to creating positive social impacts alongside economic gains (Mair & Marti, 2006). Unlike conventional entrepreneurship models that may prioritize profit maximization at the expense of local well-being, social entrepreneurship emphasizes social value creation, such as poverty

alleviation, cultural preservation, and community capacity building (Hall & Lew, 2009). In Peripheral tourism enterprises, where social issues such as unemployment, inequality, and cultural erosion are prevalent, the inclusive and participatory approach of social entrepreneurship is crucial for fostering sustainable development and social cohesion. Given below are a few categorical advantages of social entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism:

- **Social Impact:** Social entrepreneurship in tourism prioritizes addressing social and environmental challenges while generating economic value. Compared to traditional entrepreneurship; social entrepreneurship aims to achieve social impact alongside financial sustainability (Bacq & Janssen, 2021; Dredge et al, 2021; Mair et al, 2021). By focusing on sustainable practices and community development, social entrepreneurs contribute to the well-being of local communities and the preservation of natural resources (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010).
- **Inclusive Development:** Social entrepreneurship empowers marginalized communities by providing opportunities for economic participation and leadership. By involving local stakeholders in decision-making and benefit-sharing, social entrepreneurs promote inclusive development and reduce socio-economic disparities (Solvoll et al, 2015).
- **Innovation and Adaptation:** Social entrepreneurs in tourism often pioneer innovative approaches to address complex challenges such as poverty alleviation, cultural preservation, and environmental conservation. Their adaptive strategies and creative solutions contribute to the resilience and sustainability of tourism destinations (Li, 2008).
- **Long-Term Sustainability:** Social entrepreneurship fosters long-term sustainability by integrating social, environmental, and economic considerations into business models (Austin et al, 2019; Bocken et al, 2021; Figueiredo & Raschi, 2019). By promoting responsible tourism practices and fostering community resilience, social entrepreneurs contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and natural ecosystems (Ateljevic & Li, 2009). Reduction in carbon emissions and mitigating the negative impacts of tourism on the environment are some of the further roles played by a social entrepreneur in rural tourism (Ketprapakorn & Kantabutra, 2022).

- Collaborative Partnerships: Social entrepreneurship encourages collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and local communities. By forging partnerships based on shared values and goals, social entrepreneurs amplify their impact and create lasting positive change in the tourism industry (Beeton, 2002; Gössling et al, 2019; Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010; Mair & Martí 2006; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Oumlil & Juiz, 2018; Solvoll et al, 2015; Zamani-Farahani, 2016).

Social entrepreneurship in rural tourism in the Indian context started in the early 2000s when the government of India launched a program called "Responsible Tourism" in Kerala. Kerala Tourism Development Corporation initiated this program in 2007 and it was later supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other organizations (Gopinath, 2013). A few of the other initiatives include Himalayan Ecotourism, in 2005 (Himalayan Ecotourism, n.d.) and the more recent Swadesh Darshan Scheme in 2015 by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Researchers who have studied this subject in the Indian context include Bhowmick & Chatterjee (2021), Gursay et al. (2020), Halder & Mukherjee (2019), Jain & Dasgupta (2020), Khurana & Gaba (2019), Mehta & Dubey (2021), Mishra & Mohapatra (2019), Pradhan et al. (2020), Rana & Prakash (2019) and Singh & Verma (2020); to name a few. *Thus, Social Entrepreneurship is not just a form of entrepreneurship but becomes a coping strategy for Peripheral tourism enterprises.*

While social entrepreneurship offers a practical approach to navigating these issues, understanding the underlying dynamics necessitates a deeper theoretical exploration. The challenges encountered in peripheral tourism are multifaceted, ranging from resource constraints and institutional barriers to operational and market access difficulties. To analyse these complexities, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory provides a robust theoretical lens (Komakech et al, 2024). By categorizing these challenges, the RBV theory helps identify the tangible and intangible resources crucial for sustaining and enhancing the competitive advantage of peripheral destinations.

2.3 Theoretical Backdrop

2.3 Theoretical Background

While the above coping strategies offer a practical approach to navigating the challenges, understanding the underlying dynamics necessitates a deeper theoretical exploration. Peripheral tourism destinations possess unique, location-specific resources that form the foundation of their competitive advantage. These resources—ranging from pristine natural environments and rich cultural heritage to community-driven intangible assets—are rare, valuable, and difficult to imitate. Leveraging such resources allows these destinations to create distinctive tourist experiences, which act as their Unique Selling Proposition (USP).

Resource Based View (RBV) theory provides an ideal framework to theorize these dynamics, as it emphasizes the importance of leveraging its resources to achieve and sustain competitive advantage. By applying RBV to peripheral tourism, it is possible to analyse how these destinations capitalize on their unique resources, navigate constraints, and maintain long-term viability despite challenges such as limited infrastructure, market visibility, and institutional support. The Resource-Based View (RBV) theory (Barney, 1995; Peteraf, 1993; Priem & Butler, 2001) is found to be the most suitable theory for a study like this that dwells in to identifying challenges and coping strategies as it identifies tangible and intangible resources as key variables that underpin competitive advantage in peripheral tourism. Employing the RBV framework enables distinguishing those that are strategically critical for securing a competitive edge from time to time, the analysis of challenged resources and consequently, formulating strategies to address and strengthen these vital resources for the sustained success of peripheral tourism enterprises.

Peripheral destinations heavily rely on their resources as integral components of their tourist offerings, constituting a fundamental aspect of their strategic positioning. These resources are heavily constrained due to the interplay of external environmental dynamics like political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors. These pose as major challenges to any business, especially peripheral tourism enterprises (PTE).

The entrepreneurs need a very careful and a strategic handling of these vital resources, which help PTE's gain competitive advantage, to make the business sustainable. The research uses Mintzberg's strategic framework in order to broadly categorise strategies as deliberate, emergent and ad hoc for better understanding and decision making of entrepreneurs.

Examples of deliberate strategies are observed in different tourism forms. Deliberate Strategies are observed when peripheral tourism destinations aim at balancing environmental conservation with tourism development. These strategies may include the establishment of protected areas, zoning regulations, and community-based tourism initiatives designed to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on natural ecosystems (Hall, 2019).

In the context of peripheral development, emergent strategies have been observed in the spontaneous growth of community-based tourism initiatives. These initiatives often arise from local communities seeking to capitalize on their natural resources for tourism purposes (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005).

Besides this, in Mintzberg's strategic management framework, ad hoc strategies refer to temporary, improvised, or reactive approaches to addressing specific issues or challenges as they arise (Mintzberg, 1994). These strategies are typically developed on the spot in response to immediate needs or unexpected situations, rather than being part of a preconceived, long-term plan. Ad hoc strategies may lack formalization and may not align with broader organizational goals or objectives. Instead, they are often implemented as quick fixes or stop-gap measures to manage short-term issues or capitalize on sudden opportunities. While ad hoc strategies can provide flexibility and responsiveness in dynamic environments, they may also lack consistency and coherence, posing challenges for long-term strategic planning and execution.

This study posits that strategies addressing challenges arising from strategically important resources should ideally be deliberate, while responses to other challenges may align with Mintzberg's concept of emergent or ad hoc strategies.

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) complements the RBV by emphasizing the integration of natural, physical, human, social, and economic capital (Nguyen et al, 2024). SLFT provides a holistic view that incorporates the

vulnerability context (e.g., climate change or socio-economic disparities) and institutional arrangements to help achieve sustainable outcomes.

SLFT, while valuable in understanding individual and community-level livelihoods, does not explicitly focus on enterprise-level decision-making. It speaks of institutional framework and vulnerability context but does not help analyse resources to arrive at the challenges they pose. It also does not spare any room to create strategies to cope with these challenges which would make enterprise sustainable, which is the unit of analysis for our study.

However, considering its utility, the research uses SLFT as a base and proposes a comprehensive strategy embedded sustainability business framework for tourism. The new framework considers the resources and does not consider them as capital. It also brings in the internal and external environment analysis from the strategy literature in order to ascertain which strategic resources face constraints and based on their contextual strategic positioning the type of strategies it needs to use to cope with the challenges, under the Mintzberg's framework.

Strategic Case Studies: Illustrative examples highlight the interplay of RBV, Mintzberg's strategies, and SLFT:

Tara Trust, Gujarat: By leveraging local crafts and natural landscapes, Tara Trust embodies the RBV's principles, turning unique resources into a competitive advantage. Community mobilization and marketing efforts reflect deliberate strategies, aligning with the SLFT's focus on economic and social capital (Jayaraman & Kumaran, 2020; Tara Trust, 2021; Prajapati & Choudhary, 2021).

National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM): This initiative demonstrates the application of the SLFT framework to enhance rural livelihoods through sustainable tourism (Ministry of Rural Development, 2016).

Similarly other examples of the application of the SLFT framework for sustainable rural development include a study in Greece by Buhalis & Darcy (2011) and the relationship between tourism and sustainable livelihoods in Turkey by Gursoy & Kendall (2006).

We're using Mintzberg's strategies, Resource Based View theory (RBV), and Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) to study how peripheral tourism works. This helps us understand the challenges, coping strategies, and sustainability in these places. By using these methods, we can see how strategies, resources, and sustainability are connected in tourism. This study aims to provide a framework for

understanding why Peripheral tourism enterprises are competitive and how they maintain their advantage.

2.4 Mintzberg's Strategies: Exploring Deliberate, Emergent and Ad hoc Approaches

Mintzberg's work in strategic management describes the deliberate, emergent and ad hoc strategies, offering valuable insights into the dynamic nature of organizational strategy formulation and implementation (Mintzberg, 1978). These conceptual frameworks provide an understanding of how strategies evolve within organizational contexts, contributing significantly to strategic decision-making processes. Below figure is an illustration of his strategic approach –

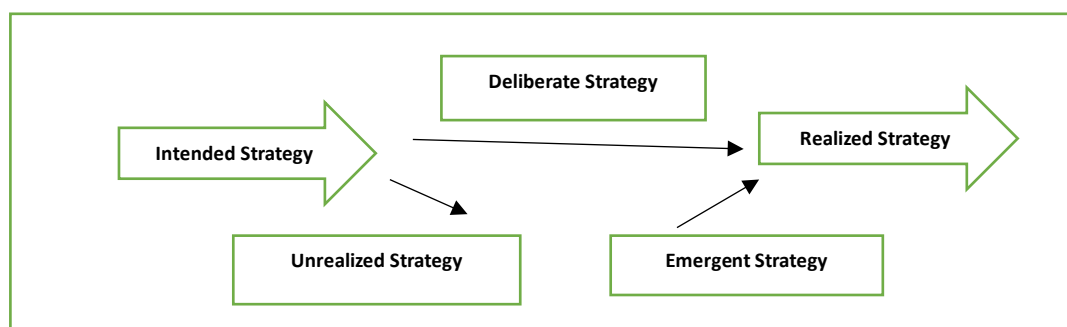


Figure 2. 1: Deliberate and emergent strategies

Source: Mintzberg (1978)

Deliberate Strategies - In contrast to emergent strategies, deliberate strategies are consciously planned and executed to achieve specific organizational goals and objectives (Mintzberg, 1978). Deliberate strategies entail systematic analysis, decision-making, and resource allocation processes aimed at positioning the organization for long-term success and competitive advantage (Mintzberg, 1987). These strategies are characterized by a clear vision, defined objectives, and well-defined action plans designed to guide organizational behaviour and resource allocation (Mintzberg, 1978). One of the primary advantages of deliberate strategies is their ability to provide clarity and direction to organizational activities, fostering alignment and coherence across different functional areas (Mintzberg, 1987).

Deliberate strategies enable organizations to proactively anticipate and respond to market opportunities and competitive threats, thereby enhancing their resilience and competitive positioning (Mintzberg, 1978).

However, deliberate strategies may also be vulnerable to rigidity and inflexibility, particularly in dynamic and turbulent environments (Mintzberg, 1987). Organizations that overly rely on deliberate strategies may struggle to adapt to changing market conditions or disruptive innovations, potentially limiting their ability to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Emergent Strategies - Emergent strategies manifest as spontaneous and unplanned developments that arise in response to evolving internal and external factors (Mintzberg, 1978). These strategies often result from adaptive responses to changing market conditions, unforeseen challenges, or accidental opportunities (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

One of the key characteristics of emergent strategies is their iterative nature, characterized by ongoing experimentation, learning, and adaptation (Mintzberg, 1987). Organizations may discover emergent strategies through trial and error, exploration of new market niches, or the leveraging of untapped resources and capabilities (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Emergent strategies can offer organizations flexibility and agility in navigating complex and uncertain environments, enabling them to capitalize on emerging trends and opportunities.

However, emergent strategies also pose challenges in terms of coherence and alignment with organizational goals and objectives (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985). Due to their spontaneous nature, emergent strategies may lack the strategic intent and directionality associated with deliberate strategies, potentially leading to inconsistencies or conflicts within the organization (Mintzberg, 1987).

By integrating both emergent and deliberate strategies, organizations can achieve a balance between stability and flexibility, enabling them to navigate dynamic and uncertain environments effectively (Mintzberg, 1987). This integrative approach allows organizations to harness the benefits of both proactive planning and emergent learning, fostering strategic agility and resilience in an increasingly complex and competitive landscape (Mintzberg & Waters, 1985).

Examples of emergent and deliberate strategies are observed in different tourism forms. In the context of ecotourism development, emergent strategies have

been observed in the spontaneous growth of community-based tourism initiatives. These initiatives often arise from local communities seeking to capitalize on their natural resources for tourism purposes (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005). Emergent strategies can also be observed in the development of cultural heritage tourism products, viz - the transformation of abandoned industrial sites into heritage tourism attractions may occur over time as local communities recognize the economic potential of preserving and showcasing their industrial heritage (Richards & Munsters, 2010). In the adventure tourism sector, emergent strategies can be observed in the spontaneous creation of new adventure experiences by entrepreneurial individuals or small businesses, arising in response to changing consumer preferences or emerging trends in adventure travel (Page & Connell, 2020).

Deliberate Strategies are observed when destination marketing organizations (DMOs) employ deliberate strategies in their promotional efforts to attract tourists. These strategies involve careful planning and execution of marketing campaigns targeting specific market segments or geographic regions (Matusse et al., 2023, Pike & Page, 2014). Similarly, sustainable tourism planning often involves deliberate strategies aimed at balancing environmental conservation with tourism development. These strategies may include the establishment of protected areas, zoning regulations, and community-based tourism initiatives designed to mitigate the negative impacts of tourism on natural ecosystems (Hall, 2019).

Ad hoc strategies - Besides this in Mintzberg's strategic management framework, ad hoc strategies refer to temporary, improvised, or reactive approaches to addressing specific issues or challenges as they arise (Mintzberg & McHugh, 1985). These strategies are typically developed on the spot in response to immediate needs or unexpected situations, rather than being part of a preconceived, long-term plan. Ad hoc strategies may lack formalization and may not align with broader organizational goals or objectives. Instead, they are often implemented as quick fixes or stop-gap measures to manage short-term issues or capitalize on sudden opportunities. While ad hoc strategies can provide flexibility and responsiveness in dynamic environments, they may also lack consistency and coherence, posing challenges for long-term strategic planning and execution.

2.5 Resource Based View (RBV) Theory

This is a strategic management theory that suggests that a firm's competitive advantage is based on its unique resources and capabilities. How social entrepreneurs can develop sustainable tourism ventures that contribute to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and create economic opportunities for local communities can be explained by the RBV theory.

RBV theory offers insightful information about how social entrepreneurs acquire and use resources in the context of entrepreneurship. Organisations display distinctive traits in the field of entrepreneurship, notably social entrepreneurship. They frequently lack established reputations and are smaller, newer, and strongly reliant on interorganizational ties (Carayannopoulos, 2009; Chua et al., 2011; Fischer & Reuber, 2014; Wiklund et al, 2009). Furthermore, entrepreneurs themselves differ from the general population and focus on aggressive growth (Sawang et al, 2025). These entrepreneurs produce benefits by using resources in a distinctive way (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). In order to create a sustained competitive advantage for social ventures, this study examines the relationship between RBV theory and social entrepreneurship, emphasizing the importance of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) and intangible resources in creating sustainable competitive advantage for social ventures.

According to RBV theory, companies can acquire a competitive advantage by utilising strategic resources. Resources which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable are considered strategic resources (Barney, 1991). These assets are crucial for developing a firm's strategy since they provide the foundation for generating economic value. RBV theory provides important insights into how social ventures can improve SCA by efficiently utilising their resource base within the framework of social entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurs in rural tourism can contribute to the competitive advantage of their businesses by tapping and developing their unique resources and capabilities (Dees, 1998; Utami & Alamanos, 2023). Harnessing and sharpening the skills of the locals, in-depth knowledge of local cultures and traditions, developing expertise in sustainable tourism practices, inclusive sustainable growth of the local communities and other stakeholders by social entrepreneurs could be an example here. Adoption of new technologies to improve their tourism products and services, and forming partnerships with other organizations to expand their reach are

further examples of how a social entrepreneur can provide a competitive advantage to their venture in a rural setting. These would enable social entrepreneurs to develop valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable tourism products and services. Along with their business, they would also be contributing to the sustainable development of rural communities. Based on the examination of 14 case studies, Rangone (1999) provides an RBV viewpoint on how small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) might create a sustainable competitive advantage through three key competencies: the capacity for innovation, the capacity for manufacturing, and the capacity for market management. SMEs may stand out and achieve a competitive advantage by successfully utilising these talents.

The RBV theory also has consequences for research on management information systems, particularly in regards to the function of ICTs (information and communication technologies). While ICTs have grown in strength and accessibility, it is debatable whether they can help businesses gain a strategic competitive edge or just keep up with their rivals (Qosasi et al., 2019; Powell & Dent-Micallef, 1997). Technologies that are easily transportable do not produce rents from an RBV standpoint. The interface between knowledgeable users and ICTs, however, may be unique, giving organisations competence at converting computing power into information a major advantage over less knowledgeable rivals (Gomes & Lopes, 2022).

Theorists have offered many definitions and categorizations of resources within the RBV framework (Amit and Schoemaker, 1993; Barney and Arikan, 2001; Grant, 1991; Kellermanns et al, 2016; Smaguc, 2022; Wernerfelt, 1984). These concepts cover both real and intangible resources, including reputation, organisational capital, financial capital, human capital, and technology capital. The RBV recognises the value of intangible resources, including tacit knowledge, corporate culture, marketable expertise, and distinctive internal processes. RBV theorists also address barriers to imitation, known as isolating mechanisms —that restrict the ease of resource replication (Lepak et al., 2007; Reboud et al., 2022). These mechanisms include historical circumstances, idiosyncratic nature, and causal ambiguity. The peculiar organisational culture, accumulated resources, abilities, experiences, and employee personalities of a corporation all contribute to its idiosyncratic resources. A company's

resource mix includes tacit, non-marketable resources, making it challenging for competitors to copy. The difficulty of comprehending and replicating a leader's plan leads to causal ambiguity. When acquiring resources, historical circumstances have an impact and shape each company's distinctive resource.

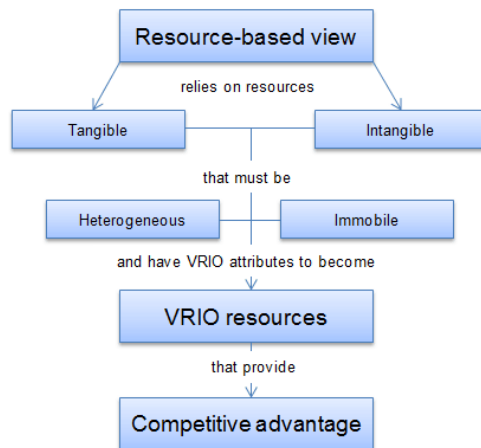


Figure 2. 2: RBV Model

Source: Birger Wernerfelt (1984), Jay B. Barney (1991)

An explanation of the RBV model above linking it to peripheral tourism and social entrepreneurs –

Tangible and Intangible Resources: Social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism may have both tangible and intangible resources at their disposal. Physical assets like land, structures, or vehicles used for tourism activities are examples of tangible resources. A few examples of intangible resources are social networks, cultural skills, community connections, and local knowledge. These resources contribute to the overall value proposition and competitive advantage of social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism.

Heterogeneous and Immobility of Resources: In peripheral tourism, social entrepreneurs can leverage the heterogeneity and immobility of resources. Heterogeneity refers to the uniqueness of resources that are not easily replicable by competitors. Social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism can offer distinctive experiences and products that differentiate them from mainstream tourist destinations. Immobility refers to the fact that certain resources cannot be easily transferred or relocated to another location. For example, social entrepreneurs may have established

strong relationships with local communities or have exclusive access to specific natural or cultural attractions in the peripheral area.

VRIO Attributes: The RBV theory suggests that resources must possess VRIO attributes to provide a competitive advantage. VRIO stands for valuable, rare, inimitable, and organization. In peripheral tourism, social entrepreneurs can create VRIO resources by developing valuable and rare assets, such as unique cultural experiences, unspoiled natural environments, or authentic interactions with local communities. These resources can be difficult to imitate or substitute, giving social entrepreneurs a competitive advantage over their competitors.

Competitive Advantage: By leveraging the tangible and intangible resources, heterogeneity, immobility, and VRIO attributes, social entrepreneurs engaged in peripheral tourism can establish a sustainable competitive advantage. They can offer unique and authentic experiences to tourists, cater to niche markets, and create positive social and environmental impacts. This aligns with the notion of the RBV theory, where the focus is on leveraging internal resources to achieve a competitive advantage rather than solely relying on the competitive environment.

Challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in rural tourism can also be explained by the RBV theory viz resource constraints, like limited access to capital, technology and expertise. Institutional barriers such as government regulations may be another challenge that social entrepreneurs could face and these could limit their ability to develop sustainable tourism units (Brush & Chaganti, 1999; Dias et al., 2024). However, by constantly developing and re-inventing their unique resources and capabilities, and continuously improving their businesses, social entrepreneurs can mitigate the above challenges and achieve sustained competitive advantage. In the process, they will also be contributing to the achievement of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thus, the RBV theory proves to be a useful framework for comprehending how social entrepreneurs in rural tourism can build sustainable tourism enterprises.

2.6 Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism (SLFT)

SLFT is a theoretical framework that has been developed to guide the sustainable development of tourism in rural areas. It proposes that sustainable tourism development should be based on the sustainable livelihoods of local communities. Conroy & Litvinoff (1988) proposed an integrated ideology for the sustainable development of rural areas. Later, the Department for International Development proposed a people-centric sustainable livelihoods (SL) framework (DFID, 1999). A sustainable livelihoods framework for tourism (SLFT) demonstrating assets, institutional framework, vulnerability context and sustainable livelihood strategies (tourism-related and non-tourism-related activities) and outcomes was proposed by Shen et al (2008) (figure 2.2).

The framework suggests that income, employment and other livelihood opportunities for local communities can be contributed through tourism. Five key sustainable livelihood components viz: natural capital, physical capital, human capital, social capital, and financial(economic) capital are identified by the SLFT framework (Bunting et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2021).

The natural resources and ecosystems that support tourism activities refer to the natural capital component of sustainable livelihoods (DFID, 1999). Infrastructure and facilities that support tourism, such as transportation, accommodations, and attractions refer to the physical capital (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2019). Skills, knowledge, and expertise of local residents, which can be developed and utilized to support tourism refers to the human capital (DFID, 1999). Social networks and relationships between individuals and organizations that can facilitate collaboration and cooperation in tourism development refer to the social capital (DFID, 1999). Financial resources that are required to support tourism development refer to the financial (economic) capital (Shen et al., 2008).

Governmental institutions, non-governmental institutions, and tourism enterprises comprise the institutional arrangements. The degree of people's participation and their development efforts are influenced and affected by these

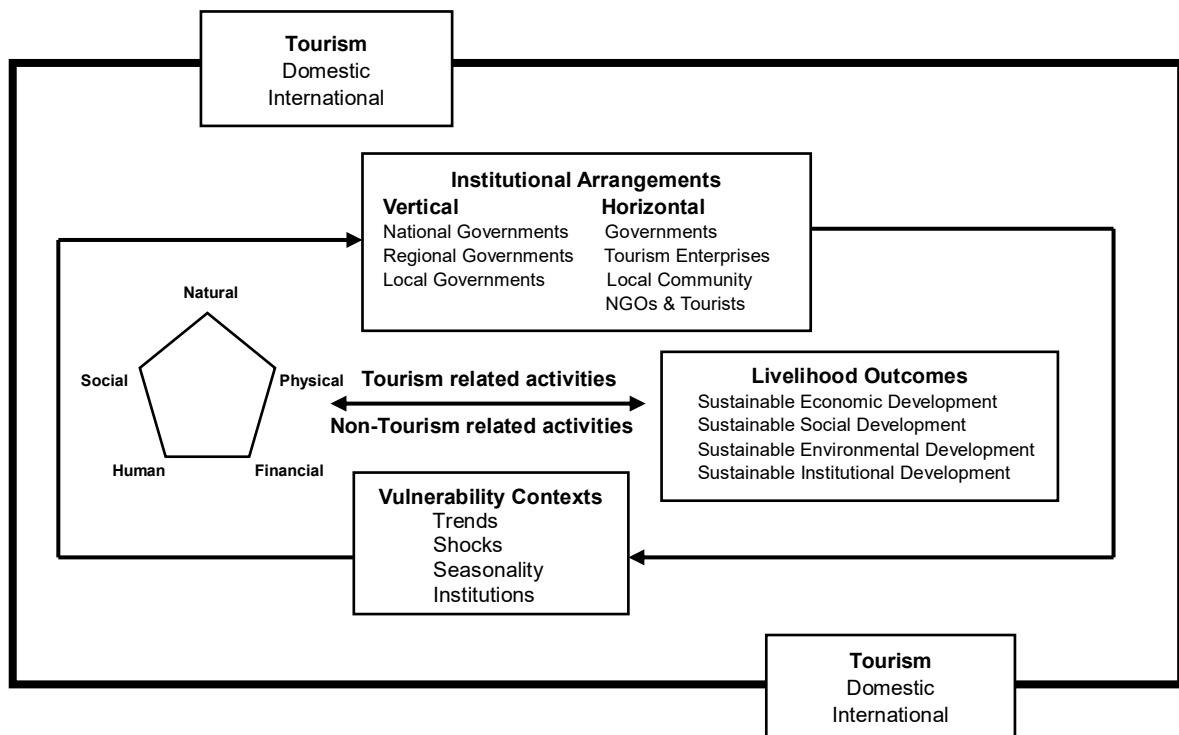


Figure 2. 3: SLFT Framework

Source: Adapted from (DFID,1999; Shen et al., 2008)

institutional arrangements (Mikulcak, 2015). Involving the rural locals in the tourism business through effective communication increases their awareness to protect their fragile environment (Richins, 2009; Nguyen, 2020). The vulnerability context is the external environment influencing the sustainability of rural households (Shen et al., 2008; Onur et al., 2018). Within the vulnerability context, *institutions* refer to the formal and informal structures, norms, and rules that influence individuals' and communities' access to resources and capacity to respond to external shocks. These include government bodies at various levels, financial institutions, tourism enterprises, and non-governmental organizations, among others. Their role is distinct from the broader *institutional arrangements* component of the framework, which focuses on the structural relationships and governance mechanisms among stakeholders. In the context of vulnerability, institutions are considered as factors that can either exacerbate or mitigate livelihood risks, depending on their responsiveness, accessibility, and alignment with local needs and conditions.

The livelihood strategies are tourism-related activities (employment, business, and related services through tourism) and non-tourism-related activities (farming, timber harvesting) (Shen et al., 2008). The livelihood outcomes are the economic,

social and environmental sustainability the tourism project tries to achieve (Aazami & Shanazi, 2020).

A five-step process is proposed by the SLFT framework. This involves the identification of the local livelihood assets, an understanding of the tourism market, analysis of the tourism impacts, development of tourism products and services, and monitoring and evaluation. Social entrepreneurs by adopting the SLFT framework can develop rural tourism enterprises that contribute to the well-being of local communities, minimize negative impacts on the environment and preserve local culture and traditions.

Several researchers have adopted and conceptualized changes to the livelihoods framework to benefit locals in a rural setting (Atun et al., 2019; Deswandi, 2017). Moswete & Thapa (2018) examined the impact of local governance structures on the livelihoods of craft producers in Botswana and found that the lack of institutional support was a key constraint on their ability to access tourism markets. A study by Saarinen (2019) analyzed the impact of tourism on the livelihoods of indigenous communities in South Africa and found that tourism could provide an essential source of income and employment but also raised challenges related to cultural preservation and community participation. Shueb-Ur-Rahman et al (2019) discuss co-management as a decision-making tool wherein shared decision-making between stakeholders such as central, regional and local government, private sector businesses, and civil societies helps increase the sense of responsibility and mitigate conflicts.

Some examples of the application of the SLFT framework for sustainable rural development include a study in Greece using the framework by Buhalis and Darcy (2011). Similarly, the relationship between tourism and sustainable livelihoods in Turkey using the framework was studied by Gursoy and Kendall (2006). A few successful applications of SLFT framework in India include –

a) The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is one example of an SLFT implementation that has been successful in rural parts of India (Ministry of Rural Development, 2016). The Ministry of Rural Development's flagship initiative, DAY-NRLM, was introduced in 2016 with the goal of fostering sustainable lives for rural households. DAY-NRLM implements a number of interventions to improve the lives of rural people, especially women, by giving them access to financial services, training for skill development, and market possibilities.

The programme focuses on forming self-help groups (SHGs) for women and increasing their capacity to participate in activities that generate revenue. In several Indian states, DAY-NRLM has been a success. For instance, the programme has significantly improved livelihoods and reduced poverty in the state of Bihar (State Rural Livelihoods Mission, Bihar). Women have been able to access loans and launch small companies due to the establishment of SHGs, which has raised their incomes and level of living. The programme has also aided in the formation of producer organisations and market connections, allowing rural farmers to achieve sustainable incomes by selling their goods at fair rates.

b) The application of SLFT through Rajasthan watershed development programmes is another illustration (Watershed Development and Soil Conservation Department, Rajasthan). The management of water resources, preservation of the soil, and improvement of means of subsistence are the main objectives of these programmes, which are funded by institutions like the Watershed Development and Soil Conservation Department. These programmes have improved water availability by putting into practise strategies like contour bunding, rainwater harvesting, and afforestation. This has also increased agricultural output and given farmers more chances to make a living.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

In the literature study, we explore how social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism use Mintzberg's strategies, along with the Resource-Based View (RBV) and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism (SLFT). Peripheral tourism involves travel activities in rural or remote areas known for their unique natural and cultural features (Butler & Hinch, 2007; D'Arcy & Deveau, 2012). Social entrepreneurs in these areas use their resources to gain competitive advantages and promote sustainability.

Challenges and coping strategies in peripheral tourism are analysed using a PESTLE (Political, Economic, Sociocultural, Technological, Environmental, and Legal) framework. These challenges include limited infrastructure (Giddy et al, 2022), seasonality (Fuste-Forne, 2022), economic vulnerability (Suthanaya & Suwarningsih, 2023), cultural preservation (Scheyvens & Cheer, 2021), environmental conservation (Mahatme et al, 2019), and regulatory constraints (Zafran & Kaufmann, 2022). Social

entrepreneurs overcome these challenges by collaborating with local communities (Nunkoo et al., 2021; Shrestha & Decosta, 2021), diversifying markets (Papamichail et al, 2023), building capacity (Mottiar et al, 2018), innovating (Melgaco, 2022), and adopting sustainable practices (Malkowski et al, 2022).

The RBV framework suggests that social entrepreneurs can gain a competitive edge by leveraging tangible and intangible resources. Tangible resources include physical assets, while intangible resources encompass social networks, cultural skills, community connections, and local knowledge. Mintzberg's strategies provide insight into how these entrepreneurs develop and implement their strategies in organizational settings.

The SLFT framework emphasizes the importance of sustainable tourism development based on the livelihoods of local communities, considering natural, physical, human, social, and economic capital. Institutional arrangements and the vulnerability context shape sustainable livelihood strategies and outcomes, highlighting the need to balance economic, social, and environmental sustainability in rural tourism.

Research gaps for the above literature review are attempted using Miles Taxonomy. Miles (2017) proposed a framework for identifying gaps in tourism literature built on two previous models of Müller-Bloch and Kranz (2014) and Robinson et al. (2011). His framework consists of seven core research gaps viz: (a) Evidence Gap; (b) Knowledge Gap; (c) Practical-Knowledge Conflict Gap; (d) Methodological Gap; (e) Empirical Gap; (f) Theoretical Gap; and (g) Population Gap

Table 2. 1: Identification of Gaps using Miles Taxonomy –

Research Gap Type	Identification from literature
Evidence Gap (Contrary Evidence Gap) An evidence gap happens when something surprising goes against what most people believe based on past research. This can happen when different studies seem to say different things about the same topic. While each study might make sense on its own, they can contradict each other when we look at them together. Finding these contradictions starts with carefully looking	While the literature review highlights successful implementations of sustainable livelihood by Social Entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism (Mair & Marti, 2006), it also acknowledges challenges such as limited infrastructure, economic vulnerability, and regulatory constraints (Giddy et al, 2022; Gursoy et al., 2020; Kumar & Singh, 2019; Mishra et al., 2019). While certain initiatives may lead to positive outcomes for rural livelihoods through social entrepreneurship ventures, there are also

at each study. Then, we need to put all the results together to see where they disagree (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014).	significant challenges and barriers that hinder the realization of these benefits (Che, 2023; Hossain et al., 2025; Olafsdottir et al., 2020). Therefore, while individual case studies may demonstrate positive impacts, a broader examination reveals that the overall effectiveness of tourism in promoting sustainable enterprises in rural areas is uncertain and context dependent. There is thus an evidence gap which needs further research.
Knowledge Gap (Knowledge Void Gap) The knowledge gap is a common problem in research. It usually comes up in two situations. First, there might not be enough information in a certain field or area, even if related fields have lots of research. Second, sometimes, the results of a study don't match what researchers thought they would find (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014).	While the literature review provides insights into how social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism leverage resources (Gössling et al, 2019; Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010; McGehee & Kim, 2004; Solvoll et al., 2015), the researchers have not found a comprehensive domain of knowledge that imbibes a) all the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises. b) coping strategies to mitigate these challenges and most important c) looking at it through the prism of strategy to make the businesses sustainable. Research is necessary to study resources in peripheral tourism enterprises from a strategic perspective to achieve competitive advantage.
Practical-Knowledge Gap (Action-Knowledge Conflict Gap) This gap means there's a difference between what experts say should happen and what actually happens in real life. For example, experts might recommend one thing, but people do something different. Research can help understand why this difference exists (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014)	While the literature extensively discusses the theoretical frameworks (Nguyen et al, 2024), strategies (Mintzberg, 1978) and potential benefits of sustainable tourism practices for rural development like economic development, heritage preservation, community empowerment, and environmental conservation (Aas et al., 2016; Butler, 2010; Gössling et al., 2019; Hall & Page, 2014; Nunkoo et al., 2021; Ribeiro et al., 2021; Urry et al., 2020;); other studies focus on negative consequences, such as overtourism, environmental degradation, and cultural commodification (Filimonau et al., 2020; Liu,2020; Scott et al., 2020; Stone, 2021). The literature above brings out not an evidence gap but a gap between knowledge(academic) and action – ground level implementation of strategies or absence thereof. Thus, more than an evidence gap, it is an action-knowledge conflict gap which can be addressed with a comprehensive challenges and coping strategy framework.

Methodological Gap (Method and Research Design Gap) A methodological gap is about problems caused by the way research is done. It looks at conflicts that come up because of the methods used in previous studies. This gap suggests trying different ways of doing research, especially if most studies in an area use the same method (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014)	Most of the work done in the area has studied the issue in silos by studying either just the challenges or destination specific advantages or use of community participation et al (Poon et al, 2012; Khoo and Dzisi, 2019). However, no research in the area posits a comprehensive methodology to study the challenges and coping strategies through the prism of strategy which throws up a methodological gap. Most studies in peripheral tourism are seen using case methodology (Masiero & Hrankai, 2022; Zafran & Kaufmann, 2022) which is also the method we have used in our research.
Empirical Gap (Evaluation Void Gap) An empirical gap means there are gaps in previous research that need to be checked with real evidence. This happens when research findings or ideas have not been tested in real life. For example, there might not be any studies that have looked at a certain topic in a practical way (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014)	While the review synthesizes existing literature and provides insights from case studies (Gursoy & Kendall, 2006), which test the propositions researched by the researchers few studies have conducted ground level study. So, empirical gap has been identified in the extant literature
Theoretical Gap (Theory Application Void Gap)	The existing literature uses RBV theory (Barney, 1995; Peteraf, 1993; Priem & Butler, 2001), in focusing of challenges faced but do not use the theory with an objective of making it a strategic inflection point to identify a strategic resource(s) to gain competitive advantage to achieve sustainable livelihood(business). The perspective of using an all-encompassing theory of RBV to make managerial decisions is ignored; a theoretical gap that this research envisages to bridge.
Population Gap A population gap means that certain groups of people have not been studied enough in research. This could be because of their gender, race, age, or other factors. It is important to study all different kinds of people to get a full picture (Robinson et al., 2011).	Research on peripheral tourism destinations, particularly focusing on the supply side, the challenges they face, and the strategies used to cope in emerging economies like India, does not find prominence in the existing literature (researcher's observation).

The above research gaps enumerated in table 2.1 show a need to research the challenges and coping strategies in a comprehensive manner.

Research Gap 1: *Research is required on the challenges faced by social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism, including resource constraints, institutional*

barriers, market access and operational difficulties. Exploring coping strategies to overcome these challenges would be beneficial.

Research Gap 2: *Limited studies have explored the specific application of the RBV framework in social entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism (Abbas et al., 2019; Day & Jean-Denis, 2016; Dentchev et al., 2023; Munoz & Kimmitt, 2019), necessitating further research to understand how social entrepreneurs effectively leverage resources to gain competitive advantages in rural tourism settings.*

Research Gap 3: *To evaluate the success of applying the SLFT framework in various rural tourism situations, empirical studies are required (Lopez-Sanz et al., 2021, Yang et al., 2021). The evaluation of the effects of SLFT-based interventions on local livelihoods, environmental preservation, and social development (Angelsen et al., 2014; Baloch et al., 2023) should be the primary focus of research.*

Research Gap 4: *While studies have separately examined the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework and the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism (SLFT) in the context of social entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism, there is a gap in research that explores the potential integration of these two frameworks. Specifically, there is a need to investigate how the strategic management principles outlined in Mintzberg's strategies can be combined with the RBV theory to inform the application of the SLFT framework in rural tourism settings. This integration could provide a more holistic understanding of how social entrepreneurs leverage their resources and capabilities to achieve sustainable development goals while navigating the complex dynamics of rural tourism environments.*

Overall, the literature review provides a broad overview of peripheral tourism, the challenges and coping strategies adopted by social entrepreneurs and the use and benefits of the RBV and SLFT framework in peripheral tourism. This study will focus on the above four research gaps in the following chapters. ***By using SLFT framework, with RBV theory as a backdrop, in conjunction with Mintzberg's strategy framework, the research will also propose a multi-dimensional framework to address peripheral tourism challenges effectively while promoting sustainability and competitive advantage.***

Chapter 3

Methodology

"Method" refers to the specific procedures, techniques, or approaches used to gather and analyze data in order to address a research question or objective. This includes the systematic and organized set of steps followed to conduct research and ensure the reliability and validity of findings (Newman, 2014). Quantitative research focuses on numerical data and statistical analysis. This research however, aims to uncover insights, meanings, and interpretations through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data. Investigation of social and cultural contexts, subjective experiences and the influence of societal factors on individual behavior are a part of this study which are explored only through qualitative research (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2014; Silverman, 2016) and hence this methodology is necessitated.

Qualitative study allows to explore intricate phenomena that are challenging to quantify accurately. Qualitative study also promotes flexibility and adaptability throughout the research process, enabling researchers to refine their focus and generate new theories or hypotheses based on emerging insights (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2014). It gives an in-depth understanding by delving deeply into participants' perspectives, motivations, and meanings, thus offering a comprehensive view (Patton, 2014). Qualitative research also gives a contextual insight by highlighting the influence of cultural norms, social structures, and historical backgrounds (Merriam, 2009), which shape behaviour and decision-making processes of individuals (Geertz, 1973) and enable a more holistic understanding of human experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Weber, 2012). It provides a platform for individuals from marginalized communities to share their stories, perspectives, and lived experiences; thereby empowering them (Sandelowski, 2000; Silverman, 2016; Smith, 2008). Qualitative research complements quantitative research by providing a deeper understanding of quantitative findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2014).

Some common types of qualitative research include:

- **Ethnography:** This involves immersing oneself in a particular culture or social group to understand their behaviours, beliefs, and practices. Ethnographic research often involves long-term observation and participant observation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Marcus, 1998)
- **Phenomenology:** Phenomenological research aims to understand individuals' subjective experiences of a phenomenon. Researchers seek to uncover the essence or meaning of these experiences through in-depth interviews or analysis of written accounts (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Smith et al, 2009)
- **Case Study:** Case studies involve an in-depth examination of a particular individual, group, organization, or event. Researchers gather detailed information through interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore complex phenomena within a specific context (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2018)
- **Grounded Theory:** Grounded theory aims to develop theoretical explanations grounded in empirical data. Researchers collect and analyse data to identify patterns and concepts, iteratively refining their theories based on the data (Charmaz, 2014; Glaser & Strauss, 2017)
- **Content Analysis:** Content analysis involves systematically analysing textual, visual, or audiovisual data to identify themes, patterns, or trends. Researchers may use coding schemes to categorize and interpret the content of documents, media, or other sources (Krippendorff, 2018; Neuendorf, 2016)
- **Narrative Inquiry:** Narrative inquiry focuses on exploring individuals' stories or accounts to understand their lived experiences and perspectives. Researchers analyse narratives to identify themes, structures, and meanings embedded within personal stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008).
- **Discourse Analysis:** Discourse analysis examines the language and communication practices used to construct social reality. Researchers analyse texts, conversations, or other forms of discourse to uncover power dynamics, social norms, and ideological influences (Gee, 2014; Phillips et al., 2004)

Case study methodology is well-suited for the research on the peripheral areas of Goa due to its ability to provide in-depth insights into complex, real-world phenomena within their natural context (Yin, 2018). Since the study in this thesis involves investigating the unique characteristics, challenges, and opportunities of rural tourism in specific locations, case studies allow to explore these contexts comprehensively (Stake, 2005). This methodology emphasizes the use of multiple

sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, and documents (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Case studies also enable to capture the richness and intricacies of each peripheral destination, considering their socio-economic, cultural, and environmental dynamics (Yin, 2018). This approach allows for a holistic understanding of the factors influencing sustainable livelihoods and rural development through tourism in diverse contexts (Stake, 2005). By examining multiple cases within Goa's peripheral areas, we can compare and contrast different experiences, practices, and outcomes, thereby enhancing the generalizability and robustness of our findings (Yin, 2018). This comparative analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the variations and commonalities in rural tourism development across different locations (Stake, 2005).

3.1 Research Objectives and Research Questions

From the literature review and identified gaps following research questions emanate.

- a. What are the strategically important resources for a peripheral tourism enterprise (PTE)?
- b. What are the resource constraint challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprise?
- c. What is the impact of internal dynamics (resource quality) on peripheral tourism enterprise
- d. What is the impact of external dynamics (institutional arrangements, and vulnerability contexts) on peripheral tourism enterprise?
- e. What are the coping strategies to mitigate the challenges faced by the resource constraints by peripheral tourism enterprise?
- f. Do the strategies significantly change based on the industry life cycle?
- g. What are the types of strategies required to mitigate the types of challenges?

The above research questions lead us to the following research objectives –

1. To study the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises.
2. To explore coping strategies employed by peripheral tourism enterprises.
3. How does the industry life cycle influence the strategic importance and utilization of resources in peripheral tourism enterprises?

3.2 Research Proposition

This study offers a thorough examination of challenges and coping strategies in peripheral tourism enterprises, in the theoretical background of Mintzberg's strategies, Resource Based view theory and SLFT framework. The study posits the following propositions to be tested through the research to offer insightful conclusions and suggestions to social entrepreneurs, stakeholders and policy makers.

Proposition 1a Natural and Economic resources are strategically more important in comparison to other resources to gain competitive advantage for a peripheral tourism enterprise

Proposition 1b Natural, Social and Economic resources face significant challenges due to internal and external dynamics in comparison to other resources.

Proposition 1c Strategic importance of each resource is dynamic and contextual based on internal and external environmental factors

Proposition 1d Institutional arrangements tend to pose a larger resource constraint in comparison to vulnerability context

Proposition 1e Life cycle shall impact the strategic contextualization of a resource for a peripheral tourism enterprise

Proposition 2a Social entrepreneurship is an important strategic decision to mitigate challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprise.

Proposition 2b Deliberate strategies are effective to cope up with challenges related to strategic resources

Proposition 2c Emergent and ad hoc strategies are effective with resources which are strategically not so important.

Proposition 2d Type of strategy used to cope with a challenge of resource constraint directly impacts the sustainability of a peripheral tourism enterprise.

3.3 Scope of the study

The study aims to investigate the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises and coping strategies used to mitigate the challenges and its impact on the sustainability of the business in emerging economies.

Additionally, the study intends to examine the specific application of the Resource-Based View (RBV) framework in social entrepreneurship integrating it with Mintzberg's strategies within the context of peripheral tourism, drawing upon the theoretical framework outlined by Barney (1991), Mintzberg (1978) and previous studies (Dees, 1998; Rangone, 1999; Kellermanns et al., 2016; Smaguc, 2022). The focus is on understanding how peripheral tourism enterprises effectively leverage resources to strategize and gain competitive advantages in rural tourism settings.

Further, the study aims to evaluate the success of applying the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework for Tourism (SLFT) in five case studies, as supported by the theoretical foundations of SLFT (Conroy & Litvinoff, 1988; Scoones, 1998; Shen et al., 2008).

3.4 Rationale for using the case study methodology

The research adopts a case study methodology to explore, understand, and evaluate the challenges faced and strategies adopted by peripheral tourism entrepreneurs. Case study methodology is a research strategy that focuses on comprehending the dynamics present within specific settings. It can involve single or multiple cases and various levels of analysis (Yin, 2009). Data collection methods employed in case studies include archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The evidence gathered in case studies can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both. Case studies serve several aims, such as providing descriptions, testing theories, or generating new theories (Eisenhardt, 1989). Multiple case studies allow analysis between cases and are thus considered more convincing and robust (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Mills et al., 2010; Quintao et al., 2020; Towgood et al., 2009). Identification of patterns, provision of elements for the construction of hypotheses and development of theories are made possible through in between case analysis of multiple cases.

This study thus adopts a research approach to generate primary knowledge regarding the development of small and medium attractions in peripheral destinations from the perspective of suppliers. The case study approach is particularly suitable for mapping the development of attractions through small and medium enterprises as it captures the nuances of development that other methods may overlook.

3.5 Rationale for using Mintzberg's strategies and the RBV and SLFT Frameworks for the case study analysis

Mintzberg's strategies - When we look at peripheral tourism enterprises, we see they use different ways to solve problems. Some are planned (deliberate), while others just happen (emergent). These places rely a lot on what they offer tourists, like their natural beauty or cultural attractions. Mintzberg's ideas about how strategies can either happen naturally or be planned out help us understand how these places make decisions and carry them out (Mintzberg, 1978).

RBV Framework: The RBV framework, which focuses on how businesses can achieve a competitive edge through the efficient use of their distinctive resources and competencies (Barney, 1995; Scoones, 1998), is well-suited for analysing peripheral tourism enterprises. This approach aids in examining how peripheral tourism enterprises make the most of their resources to generate social and financial value. We may learn more about how peripheral tourism enterprises identify, acquire, and use resources to strengthen their competitive position and achieve sustained success by applying the RBV framework to the five case studies.

It is vital to assess the effectiveness of peripheral tourism enterprises since they frequently work in economically and socially disadvantaged areas. The social, economic, and environmental aspects of the interventions made by peripheral tourism enterprises can be evaluated holistically using the SLFT paradigm. The SLFT framework was used in the study to help us better understand the larger effects of peripheral tourism enterprises on neighbourhood communities and the environment, which will help us design strategies for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

By integrating Mintzberg's Strategies, the RBV and SLFT frameworks into the analysis of the five case studies, this research can provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies, resource-based competitive advantages of peripheral tourism enterprises, as well as the social, economic and environmental outcomes of their interventions. This integrated approach enables a more refined examination of the challenges and opportunities faced by peripheral tourism enterprises, while also promoting sustainable and socially inclusive tourism in peripheral areas.

3.6 Research Methodology

3.6.1 Criteria for selection of the cases

The cases selected are efforts in peripheral tourism that have been started by entrepreneurs who also have a strong social motivation, therefore fitting the definition of social entrepreneurship (Gigauri et al, 2022; Klarin & Suseno, 2023; Manjon et al, 2022). These entrepreneurs are motivated by a desire to affect positive social change (Bailey & Lumpkin, 2023; Bhatt, 2022) and take on urgent social and environmental issues in the context of peripheral tourism (Ferrara et al, 2023). By focusing on cases that involve social entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism, this study aims to shed light on the unique characteristics, strategies, and impacts of social entrepreneurship within these contexts. The selection criteria emphasize the importance of social motives and social value creation in the entrepreneurial endeavours, highlighting the role of these entrepreneurs as change agents in promoting sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Additionally, the selection of peripheral tourism enterprises offers a chance to explore the unique challenges faced by social entrepreneurs working in economically and socially disadvantaged places. These examples shed light on how social entrepreneurship can support local economic diversification, community empowerment, and ecosystem and cultural preservation along with the individual enterprise's commercial growth.

3.6.2 Cases selected for the study

Following are the peripheral tourism cases selected for the study -

- a) Nature's Nest, Tambdi Surla, Sancordem, North Goa
- b) Wildernest, at Swapnagandha, Off Sankhali, Chorla Ghats, Goa

- c) Aangan, Verlem in Netravali, Sanguem - Goa
- d) Tanshikar Spice Farm, Netravali, Sanguem-Goa
- e) N V Eco farms, Kirlapal-Dabal - Dharbandora – Goa

3.6.3 Methodology for Individual Case Narratives Using the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory

This section describes the methodology employed for narration of each individual PTE using the Resource-Based View (RBV) in the study. The RBV theory is utilized to examine the resources, capabilities, strategies, and competitive advantages of a peripheral tourism enterprise.

In constructing the individual case narratives, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory served as an underlying lens to guide the factual and non-biased presentation of each tourism enterprise. The narrative approach subtly integrated the identification of key resources—ranging from tangible and intangible assets (Barney, 1995) to human capital, social networks, and natural endowments (Peteraf, 1993; Priem & Butler, 2001)—that each peripheral tourism initiative possessed. Within the flow of the narrative, attention was given to how these resources shaped the enterprise's evolution, with implicit consideration of their uniqueness, durability, and the community's ability to access, mobilize, and sustain them. Without overt analysis, the narratives revealed the strategic use of available assets and capacities in responding to contextual challenges and building towards long-term sustainability.

Data Collection:

Primary Data: Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, interactions, and observations with the social entrepreneur, local villagers, stakeholders, and individuals associated with the case.

Secondary Data: Secondary data was gathered from scholarly articles, reports, industry publications, and other relevant sources to complement the primary data. This included information on the peripheral tourism context, industry trends, theoretical frameworks, and existing knowledge related to peripheral tourism enterprise and RBV in tourism.

Variables which formed a part of the narrative and were explained through the case presentations.

Table 3. 1: Variables studied using the RBV Theory

Variables	Explanation of the variables
1.Tangible Resources	
Physical assets:	Infrastructure, facilities, and equipment
Financial resources:	Availability of capital, funding, and financial stability
2.Intangible Resources	
Human capital:	Knowledge, skills, and expertise of individuals involved in the peripheral tourism enterprise venture. The recognition and perception of the peripheral tourism enterprise's brand and its value in the market.
Brand reputation:	
Organizational culture:	The values, norms, and beliefs that shape the peripheral tourism enterprise's organizational behaviour and practices. Encompasses the social connections, partnerships, and collaborations with stakeholders, suppliers, customers, and local communities.
Relationships and networks:	
3.Innovation Resources	
Technological capabilities:	Ability of the peripheral tourism enterprise to adopt and leverage technological advancements.
Research and development:	Investments and activities aimed at generating new ideas, products, or services.
Process innovation:	Focuses on improving operational efficiency and effectiveness.
4.Natural Resources	
Environmental assets:	Includes natural attractions, biodiversity, landscapes, and ecosystems that contribute to the tourism experience in the peripheral tourism context.
5.Sustainable resource management practices:	Encompasses the responsible utilization and conservation of natural resources.

Source: Adapted from (Peteraf, 1993; Barney, 1995; Priem & Butler, 2001)

3.7 Data Sources

3.7.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data played a crucial role in this study. The secondary data collection for this study comprised a systematic literature review that encompassed various aspects of peripheral tourism. The initial phase involved conducting a

comprehensive literature search to gather relevant scholarly articles, reports, and other publications related to peripheral tourism. This systematic review aimed to establish a comprehensive understanding of the field, including its conceptual frameworks, key themes, and empirical evidence.

During the literature review process, a notable finding emerged that a significant proportion of peripheral tourism ventures were initiated by social entrepreneurs. This observation led to a focused examination of social entrepreneurship within the peripheral tourism context. This examination allowed for an in-depth understanding of how social entrepreneurs in these contexts create social and economic value, address social and environmental challenges, and contribute to sustainable development.

To investigate the challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises (PTEs), a PESTLE analysis was employed. This analysis provided a comprehensive breakdown of the political, environmental, social, technological, legal, and economic factors affecting these enterprises. By systematically examining each factor, the study gained insights into the specific challenges that PTEs encounter. Moreover, the PESTLE analysis framework facilitated the identification of coping strategies employed by PTEs to overcome these challenges and leverage opportunities in their respective contexts.

Additionally, it was observed that peripheral tourism enterprises often rely on natural resources as their unique selling proposition (USP). To explore this aspect further, the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory was adopted as a theoretical framework. The RBV theory allows for an analysis of how peripheral tourism enterprises identify, acquire, and deploy resources to gain a competitive advantage and achieve sustainable success. The strategies that these enterprises employed using their existing resources were studied through Mintzberg's framework (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg, 1994). Moreover, the RBV theory embeds the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) Theory (Chowdhury et al, 2023), which is particularly relevant in assessing the broader impacts of social entrepreneurship interventions on local livelihoods, environmental preservation, and social development.

By incorporating Mintzberg's strategies, the RBV theory and SLFT framework, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the resource-based

competitive advantages of peripheral tourism enterprises, as well as the social, economic and environmental outcomes of their interventions. These theoretical frameworks allow for a holistic assessment of the complexities and interdependencies within peripheral tourism, while promoting sustainable and socially inclusive tourism in peripheral areas.

Overall, the secondary data collection for this study involved a systematic literature review of peripheral tourism, followed by a focused investigation of social entrepreneurship within this context. The challenges and coping strategies of peripheral tourism entrepreneurs were examined using a PESTLE analysis, with Mintzberg's strategies, the RBV theory and SLFT framework serving as theoretical lenses to understand resource-based advantages and broader social impacts. The integration of these secondary data sources contributes to a comprehensive understanding of peripheral tourism enterprises and its implications for sustainable development.

3.7.2 Primary Data

Primary data was collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews and interactions with the entrepreneurs, local villagers and non-government organization officials who were directly involved in or affected by the peripheral tourism initiatives under investigation. These interviews provided valuable firsthand insights into the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by the entrepreneurs and the local community. The selection of interviewees was based on their roles and involvement in the social entrepreneurial activities within the peripheral tourism context. Through open-ended and semi-structured interviews, rich qualitative data was gathered, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the motivations, strategies, and impacts of the social entrepreneurs.

The researcher stayed at/visited all five units multiple times to observe and take interviews. Nature's Nest (NN) stay was in June 2012 and Sept 2014 for two days each. Day visitations to NN were in June 2012, September 2014, November 2017, July 2019, December 2022 and February 2023. Stay at Wildernest was in June 2013, followed by day visitation in October 2019. The researcher stayed for three days at the homestays at Aangan in March 2013. The resident's daily life and interactions with other people in the village, their ways of participating in tourism, their engagement in

other livelihoods, and the operations of a homestay were observed, and written notes were taken. Subsequent visitations in November 2017 and March 2022 allowed interactions with twenty-two members of the self-help groups and five homestay hosts at Aangan. Day visitation to N.V. Eco farm was in 2021. Stay at Tanshikar spice farm was in October 2014, followed by day visitations in 2017, 2018 and 2022. Day visitations also allowed interactions with the local populace which were informal, as the villagers were not exposed to formal settings and were uncomfortable giving formal interviews. The information obtained from the observations and interactions were noted for analysis.

In-depth interviews with all five entrepreneurs were conducted face-to-face through google meet during the pandemic. Detailed interviews had open-ended questions and ran for two to three hours each. In-depth online interview with Pankaj Lad -Promoter of Nature's Nest were conducted in July 2019 and 5th Feb 2021. Capt. Nitin Dhond, Promoter of Wildernest was interviewed on 7th and 8th of February 2021. Detailed interviews with the two environmentalists, viz – Shraddha and Parag Rangnekar of the non-governmental organization (NGO) who pioneered the Aangan project for Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG) were conducted on 13th Sept 2021 and 5th Oct 2021. A 2& ½ hour interview with Chinmay Tanshikar, Promoter of Tanshikar Spice Farm was video recorded through google meet on 2nd May 2021. Comprehensive interviews with Mahesh Patil, promoter of NV Eco farms was conducted on 7th February 2021 and 17th April 2021. Each interview was of a duration of 2 hours through recorded google meet sessions. Personal visits to the Panjim office of NV Eco farm were made from time to time for data verification. The researcher maintained constant contact with the staff and accounts personnel of all above mentioned units through regular phone calls, emails, and WhatsApp/text messages throughout the study. The objective of the interviews were to understand the challenges faced by the entrepreneurs, coping strategies adopted by them, the socioeconomic conditions of the residents, their existing livelihood portfolio, livelihood changes post-introduction of the project, community participation willingness and attitudes, perceptions, and behaviour that occurred post-implementation of the project.

The data collection process adhered to ethical considerations, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and privacy of the participants. The primary data collection involved establishing rapport and trust with the interviewees, creating a conducive environment for open and honest dialogue. Thorough documentation and

rigorous analysis of the collected data were undertaken to ensure data integrity and the identification of recurring themes and patterns.

Overall, the data collection methods employed in this study, involving primary data through interviews and secondary data from various sources, aimed to provide a comprehensive and multi-dimensional understanding of peripheral tourism entrepreneurs and their impact on local communities.

3.8 Data Validity and Reliability

The data validity and reliability were maintained by keeping records of the observations and interviews and triangulating the primary and secondary data (Yin, 2018). The combination of primary and secondary data sources allowed for a triangulation of data, strengthening the reliability and validity of the findings. The primary data provided firsthand accounts and contextual insights, while the secondary data provided a broader theoretical foundation and supported the analysis and interpretation of the primary data. Four criteria are used to test the rigor of case study research, viz, internal and external validity, construct validity, and reliability (Creswell, 2013; Gerring, 2004; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017). Table 3.2 summarizes the methods used for data reliability and validity for the study.

Table 3. 2: Assessment of Data Reliability and Validity

Issue	Description
Construct Validity	Multiple (five) cases used, involving several participants – viz entrepreneurs, environmentalists, non-government officials (where applicable), villagers. This is intended to have several participants (Primary data). Secondary data collected through company websites; newspaper reports etc.
Internal Validity and data credibility	Clear research objectives; detailed literature review; using multiple cases, participatory observation and in-depth interviews; data triangulation and comparative analysis of case studies
External Validity Reliability	Exploratory study on five peripheral tourism cases. Research procedures were documented, and a database of case studies was kept.

Source: Adapted from (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2017) and modified by the researchers

Construct validity/conceptualization section examines how the relevant concept has been conceptualised or operationalized (Afzal, 2017). This is achieved through evidence from multiple sources and triangulation of the data; review of the interview reports and logical explanation of the chain of events (Kelly & Cordeiro, 2020). The quality of the data and its treatment are exhibited by multiple sources and data triangulation; while the review of reports and logical explanation of chain of events provide readers with information about the development process of the work (Quintao et al., 2020). Data triangulation is observed as instrumental from the aspect of methodological rigor (Fusch et al., 2018; Shoaib & Mujtaba, 2016). This study adopts three of the four types of triangulations suggested by Yin (2017); viz: (i) Using multiple sources for data triangulation; (ii) using different evaluators for researcher triangulation and (iii) analysing the data using different theoretical frameworks like Mintzberg's strategy, the RBV and SLFT frameworks.

Internal validity refers to how trustworthy and reliable the findings of a study are within the study itself (Yin, 2017; Stake, 1995). Internal validity and data credibility is established by clearly stating the goals of the study and what it aims to investigate; a rigorous literature review; using multiple cases and employing methods like participatory observation and in-depth interviews; data triangulation and conducting a comparative analysis of case studies. This allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the robustness and trustworthiness of the research findings (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2017)

External validity refers to the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other contexts or populations (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2017). In qualitative research, generalizability is often limited, as the focus is more on in-depth exploration rather than broad generalizations (Payne & Williams, 2005). The study acknowledges this and emphasizes its focus on specific peripheral tourism cases. By deliberately choosing cases that align with the study's objectives, relevant and comprehensive data to address the research questions effectively can be obtained (Patton, 2002). The findings may be applicable to similar peripheral tourism settings or cases with similar characteristics.

Reliability, consistency, and dependability refer to the absence of mistakes in the findings if the study were conducted by another researcher using a similar

methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Through the documentation, clarification, and upkeep of a case study database and the ability to replicate the case study, the dependability of the research can be improved during the data gathering phase (Leonard-Barton, 1990; Yin, 2018). The research procedures were documented and made clear; a database of case studies was kept; and a case comparison method was used to compare the findings of the five peripheral tourism units.

3.9 Individual Case Analysis through SLFT and findings

This section outlines the methodology utilized for conducting an individual case analysis using a framework which is SLFT and enumerating the findings. Variables tested further under the SLFT model are listed below. It is to be noted here that, since the capitals (Natural Capital, Physical Capital, Human Capital, Social Capital and Financial capital) of the SLFT framework are our *foundational resources*; we will refer to them as resources, viz – Natural Resource, Physical Resource, Human Resource, Social Resource and Financial Resource.

Table 3. 3: Variables studied using the SLFT framework

Variables	Explanation of the variables
1.Natural Resource:	Refers to the natural resources and ecosystems that support tourism activities.
2.Physical Resource:	Includes infrastructure and facilities that support tourism, such as transportation, accommodations, and attractions.
3.Human Resource:	Encompasses the skills, knowledge, and expertise of local residents that can be developed and utilized to support tourism.
4. Social Resource:	Represents the social networks and relationships between individuals and organizations that can facilitate collaboration and cooperation in tourism development.
5.Financial Resource:	Refers to the financial resources required to support tourism development.
6.Institutional framework:	Includes governmental institutions, non-governmental institutions, and tourism enterprises, which shape the degree of people's participation and their development efforts.

7.Vulnerability context:		Refers to the external environment viz-trends, shocks, seasonality and institutions influencing the sustainability of rural households.
8.Livelihood Strategies Outcomes	and	Refer to the deliberate and planned actions, decisions, and activities undertaken by individuals, households, and communities to secure their livelihoods and achieve their socio-economic and environmental objectives.

Source: Adapted from (Shen et al, 2008; Bunting et al, 2013)

By examining the presence and influence of these variables across each of the five case studies, detailed individual case analysis will help gain insights into the sustainable livelihood strategies and outcomes in rural tourism.

3.10 Cross Case Analysis

This section presents a comparative analysis across the five peripheral tourism enterprises (PTEs) using the SLFT framework. Similarities and differences in terms of resource utilization, sustainable practices, and operational challenges are explored. The analysis also considers the life cycle stage of each enterprise—ranging from nascent to growth phase—highlighting how maturity influences livelihood outcomes.

Data analysis using Mintzberg's strategy:

Strategy Identification: The emergent, deliberate, and ad hoc strategies employed by the PTE were identified based on observations, interviews, and document analysis.

Strategy Evaluation: Each strategy was evaluated in terms of its origin, purpose, coherence, and alignment with organizational goals. Factors such as flexibility, responsiveness to environmental changes, and effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes were considered.

Strategy Integration: The integration and interaction of emergent, deliberate, and ad hoc strategies were analysed to understand how they complemented or conflicted with each other. The implications of strategy integration on organizational performance and sustainability were examined.

Variables that are further studied are enumerated below –

Table 3. 4: Variables studied using Mintzberg's Strategies Framework

Variables	Explanation of the variables

1. Emergent Strategies	Spontaneous and unplanned developments that arise in response to evolving internal and external factors. These strategies often result from adaptive responses to changing market conditions, unforeseen challenges, or accidental opportunities.
2. Deliberate Strategies	Consciously planned and executed strategies aimed at achieving specific organizational goals and objectives. These strategies involve systematic analysis, decision-making, and resource allocation processes designed to position the organization for long-term success and competitive advantage.
3. Ad hoc Strategies	Temporary and improvised strategies adopted in response to immediate needs or crises. These strategies are characterized by their short-term focus and lack of formal planning or coordination.

Source: Adapted from (Mintzberg, 1978; Mintzberg & Waters, 1985; Mintzberg, 1987)

These variables within Mintzberg's strategies framework help assess the strategic approaches adopted by PTEs in terms of their responsiveness, alignment with environmental changes, and effectiveness in achieving organizational objectives. By evaluating these strategies, the study aims to understand how PTEs navigate the dynamic and uncertain environment of peripheral tourism.

By examining the presence and influence of these variables, categorizing them into strategically important and other resources, identifying the challenges posed due to Institutional arrangements and vulnerability contexts, strategies used by these enterprises to mitigate the challenges posed to these categories of resources(Mintzberg framework) and their impact on the sustainability of business(continuing operations with profits, continuing operations as were, and closure of business) as outcomes in peripheral tourism. Policy recommendations too have been made from the findings of the cross-case analysis.

While SLFT proves valuable for understanding individual and community-level livelihoods, it presents certain limitations when applied to enterprise-level analysis. Specifically, SLFT focuses on capitals without detailing how strategic constraints emerge from resource configurations; lacks explicit tools for diagnosing enterprise-level challenges that arise from resource dependencies and does not provide space to identify coping strategies that enhance sustainability at the organizational level.

These limitations necessitate a broader and more enterprise-centric lens for analysis. Therefore, while SLFT serves as a foundational framework, this study

extends its scope by proposing a **Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)** that integrates enterprise-level strategy and resource deployment.

3.11 Cross-Case Findings and Emergence of the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)

Based on the cross-case SLFT analysis, this section synthesizes key findings that underscore the need for a more comprehensive framework focused on enterprise-level sustainability. It highlights SLFT's strengths in explaining contextual and community dimensions but also its limitations in guiding strategic interventions and addressing internal operational constraints of tourism enterprises. As a response, this section introduces the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)—a key contribution of the study. SBFT integrates insights from the Resource-Based View (RBV), Mintzberg's strategic typologies, and SLFT to enable holistic enterprise-level analysis and planning. The section outlines how SBFT was conceptualized and how it can be applied to the cases to assess strategic resource constraints and suggest coping strategies.

3.12 Research Contributions and Implications:

This chapter discusses the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, limitations, and avenues for further research. The study contributes to the academic discourse by modifying and extending the Sustainable Livelihood Framework to develop the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT), integrating perspectives from the Resource-Based View and Mintzberg's strategic model. It offers a novel lens to understand enterprise-level sustainability in peripheral tourism contexts. Additionally, the findings provide actionable insights for social entrepreneurs, policymakers, and tourism planners to make informed, strategy-driven interventions in rural tourism ecosystems.

3.13 Research Design

The research design explains the various parameters of the study undertaken. It also provides a plan for the assessment of the research questions. Figure 3.1 shows the research design for the study.

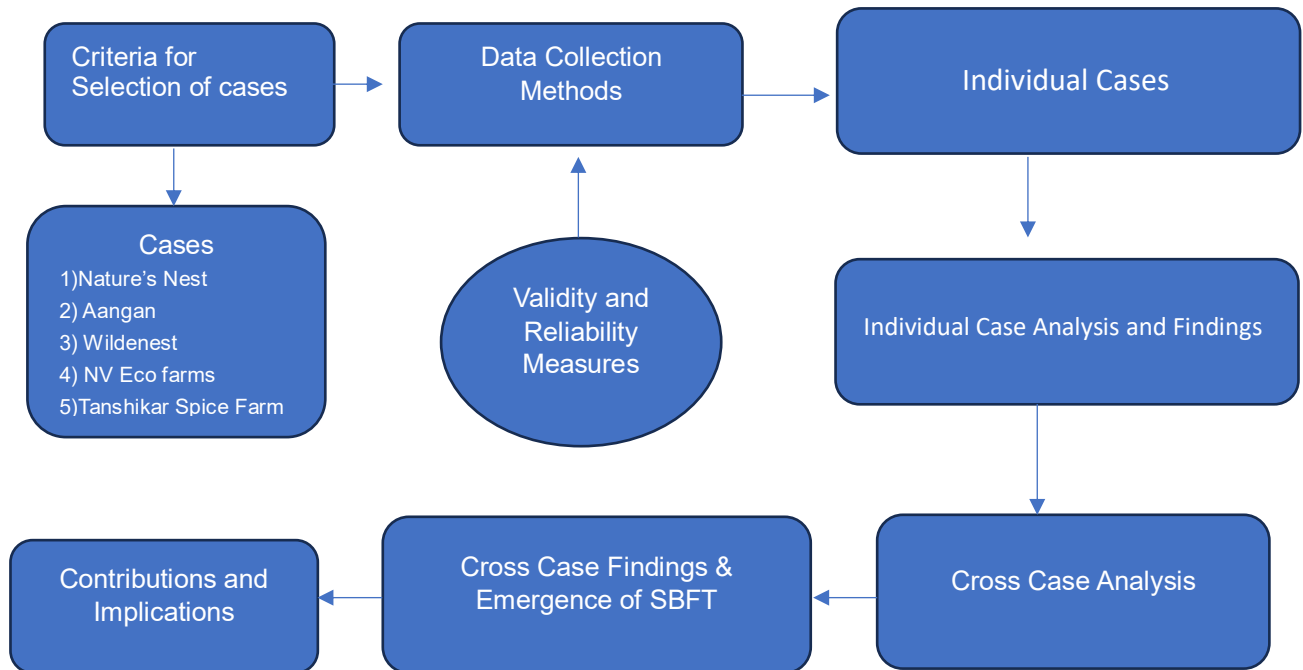


Fig 3. 1: Research Design

Chapter 4

Individual Cases

Case 1: Nature's Nest

Nature's Nest is an eco-lodge in the Tambdi Surla, Mollem area of South Goa. The village has a total geographical area of 2.71 square kilometres, 383 households and a population of 1,960 people (Government of Goa, 2023). Located in the eastern boundary of Goa, nestled in the lap of the Western Ghats, and flanked by Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary, Nature's Nest with village-styled mud-lined cottages targets birdwatchers, nature lovers, and eco travellers. The forests in the Western Ghats where Nature's Nest is lodged is unique, featuring some of the best examples of tropical forests. They are considered a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the world's 36 major areas for biodiversity (Mahatme et al., 2024). The Mollem region in the Western Ghats hosts approximately 300 bird species, many of which are exclusive to this area. It also harbors a significant portion of India's unique flora and fauna, with numerous species found only in this region (Viswanath et al., 2011).

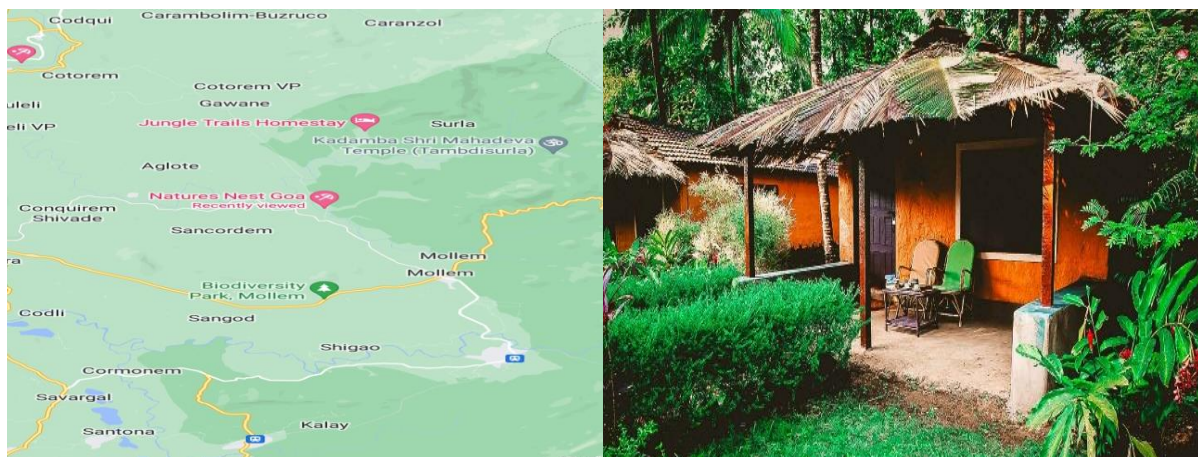




Fig 4. 1: Map to Nature's Nest, Pictures of Nature's Nest

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

The Beginning

Nature's Nest is a wildlife resort located in Mollem, Goa, which was founded by Mr. Pankaj Lad and his friend, Mr. Ramesh Zharmekar in the year 2010. Mr. Pankaj Lad holds a master's degree in Geology and was a gold medalist in his field. Upon completing his postgraduate studies, he secured a position as a geologist in a mining company through campus recruitment. However, this role was in direct contrast to his passion for birdwatching, forests, and nature. Mr. Ramesh Zharmekar was gainfully employed with the Taj Group of Hotels. Both founders had a deep passion for bird watching and a strong knowledge of the local environment's flora, fauna, topography, and culture. This passion and expertise inspired them to venture into entrepreneurship and create a unique experience for nature enthusiasts and tourists.

Mr. Pankaj Lad had a strong inclination towards wildlife and environmental conservation from an early age. He was actively involved in the NGO called Vivekananda Environment Awareness Brigade (VEAB) during his school days. Pankaj's interest in birding and wildlife grew as he spent time with environmental luminaries and members of VEAB, such as Rajendra Kerkar, Parag Rangnekar, and Nirmal Kulkarni. Pankaj's dedication to gaining practical knowledge led him to spend his entire pocket money on nature guides and days spent observing birds and their behaviours in the forests.

As Goa started gaining popularity as a wildlife destination, Pankaj recognized the growing demand for hinterland tourism. He saw an opportunity to combine his passion for nature with a viable business venture. Pankaj understood that being solely bird guides would not be sustainable in the long run, as they would have to rely on other tour operators for clients. This realization prompted him to expand their business

into tour operations, enabling them to provide a complete package holiday experience to their customers.

After an extensive search for a suitable location, Pankaj discovered an existing area with ten dilapidated cottages in Mollem in 2009. The owner of the premises, who was also searching for like-minded individuals to rent it, was impressed by Pankaj's enthusiasm and commitment. This led to a 99-year lease agreement and 50% financial assistance from the owner to renovate and revamp the cottages. In September 2010, Pankaj, along with his partner Ramesh Zharmekar, officially started the business with a borrowed capital of Rs. 20,000 from the premise owner. Despite limited funds, they were driven by their burning desire to make their vision a reality. Thus, with a personal equity of Rs. 9,000 and borrowed capital of Rs. 20,000 (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021), obtained through bootstrapping (Abreu et al., 2019; Kontogeorgopoulos and Kostopoulos, 2018) they started Nature's Nest.

The vision of Nature's Nest is to create a long-lasting conservation impact that benefits both wildlife and the local communities living in the landscape. Pankaj Lad's personal tagline, "The smile that comes on a tourist's face when they see a bird through my telescope is what I live for," reflects his deep passion for providing guests with memorable experiences in nature.

Initially, the project was a collaborative effort between Mr. Pankaj Lad and his brother, Mr. Gaurish Lad, an engineer. However, Gaurish eventually lost interest in the venture, leading to the inclusion of Mr. Ramesh Zharmekar, an arts graduate with corporate experience from the Taj Group of Hotels, who partnered with Pankaj to further develop Nature's Nest. At the outset, all operational aspects of the resort—including room bookings, property maintenance, and attending to guest needs—were personally managed by Pankaj and Ramesh. The only employees hired during this initial phase were cooks. It was only after two years of dedicated effort and extensive word-of-mouth publicity from satisfied guests that the resort experienced significant growth in its customer base, necessitating the recruitment of additional staff such as receptionists and room attendants. In alignment with their commitment to community engagement, the founders established a policy of exclusively hiring local residents from the village of Mollem for these roles. However, in instances where suitable local candidates were unavailable—particularly when prolonged absences were taken under the pretext of attending family functions—employees were sourced from the

neighbouring states of Maharashtra and Karnataka to ensure smooth operations. Additionally, the resort has a dedicated team of environmentalists who actively contribute to nature conservation initiatives.

Amongst its key offerings; Nature's Nest offers a range of wildlife, adventure, and cultural tours and excursions. These include birding (sighting more than 300 species of birds' endemic to the ghats in the nearby forests and Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary), reptile watching, butterfly and moth spotting, jeep safaris, treks to nearby heritage sites such as the Tambdi Surla temple and Bhagwan Mahavir Sanctuary, nature camps, and visits by students on nature education tours.



Fig 4. 2: *Offerings*- Top left – Tambdi Surla temple, Top Right- 'Kokum Tree Restaurant'. Bottom Left – Cane work at the village, Bottom Centre – In-house spice plantation, Bottom Right – Fish pedicure

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

The resort also hosts corporate training programs, offers fish pedicure services, and organizes film screenings focused on wildlife and nature conservation. These screenings aim to enhance visitors' awareness and appreciation of the local flora and fauna. Additionally, recordings of wildlife captured at the artificial waterholes—created by the conservation team at Nature's Nest—are shown to guests after their jungle treks. This initiative helps visitors connect more deeply with the environment, making them both engaging and educational. Nature's Nest actively collaborates with academic institutions to provide internship opportunities for postgraduate students

specializing in environmental studies. These internships, which typically range from three to six months, offer students hands-on experience in ecological research and conservation efforts. Interns are provided with subsidized food and accommodation, ensuring affordability and accessibility to aspiring environmentalists. During their tenure, interns primarily focus on documenting the region's diverse flora and fauna, studying their life cycles, behavioural patterns, and ecological significance. This research contributes to the broader body of scientific knowledge, serving as a valuable resource for conservationists, researchers, and policymakers. Furthermore, their work aids in the continuous monitoring of biodiversity, helping to assess environmental changes and inform sustainable management practices at Nature's Nest and beyond.

Guests can explore mixed plantations, visit nearby villages to observe and purchase locally crafted cane products, and savor authentic Goan cuisine at the resort's restaurant, '*The Kokum Tree*'. The restaurant offers a well-balanced menu featuring traditional Goan dishes, including two vegetarian and two non-vegetarian options. These are served alongside staple accompaniments such as rice, chapattis, dal (lentil curry), kadhi (a kokum-based digestive drink), papad (crispy lentil wafers), and dessert. Environmental sustainability is a priority, with no alcohol, no loud music, and a waste management system in place to segregate and recycle waste (wet waste is recycled as manure for the in-house mixed plantation and dry waste sent to a nearby plant for shredding and further processing). The mud lined cottages, with large ventilations, tiled roofs, red oxide flooring, and built with local materials such as coconut wood, rice straw, and bamboo were initially cooled naturally without any air conditioning. The courtyards of these cottages are layered with cow dung, which acts as a natural coolant. Hot water provided to the rooms are through a unique boiler which is heated up with local biomass and wood from the locality. Harvested rainwater is used for bathing and other sanitation activities.

In the first four years of his business, Pankaj focussed only on tourists interested in birding as visitors to Nature's Nest. The mud lined cottages didn't have air conditioning, there was no alcohol provided and no swimming pool facility. Pankaj felt air conditioners were responsible for the greenhouse gas effect, which is a major contribution to ozone depletion. Alcohol and swimming pool would both lead to tourists making noise in the premise and disturbing animal life around. Reflecting Pankaj's values; the birding tourists too were highly conscientious and needed bare minimum

comforts. They arrived at Nature's Nest from October to January, when bird sightings were optimum at the western ghats. The financial figures for the first four years are presented below.

Table 4. 1: The financial figures of Natures Nest from 2010 – 2013

Nature's Nest					
S. No	Particular's	2010	2011	For 2012	The Year 2013
	Initial Investment	40000	70000	45000	190000
1)	Number of Cottages	8	8	8	8
	Max Possible Occupancy(days/year) for 8 cottages	2920	2920	2920	2920
2)	Total days of booking /year for 8 cottages	0	134	605	557
3)	Occupancy Rate	0.00%	4.59%	20.72%	19.08%
4)	Total Revenue (Rs)			1577400	1777000
5)	Total Expenditure			1233000	1430000
6)	Profit Before Tax			344400	347000
7)	Profit After Tax			241080	242900

Source: Pankaj Lad (17.12.2023)

Growth

Nature's Nest embarked on a journey of growth and improvement to enhance its financial performance and attract more tourists. Pankaj Lad, implemented various marketing and promotional activities to revitalize the business.

In 2013, adventure activities such as wall climbing, rappelling, fox flying, zip flying, and Burma bridge were introduced to the lodge's offerings. This addition aimed to engage pleasure-seeking tourists and boost financials. Nature's Nest also formed a cooperative venture with "India Untamed," a group specializing in animal and birding trails across India. Through this partnership, tourists interested in trekking in other parts of the country were directed to "India Untamed," while those interested in exploring the hinterlands of Goa were referred to Nature's Nest. These initiatives contributed to increased investment in 2013, as reflected in the financial figures in Table 4.1

To accommodate customer preferences, certain changes were made. Although drinks were not served in the restaurant initially, visitors were allowed to bring their own drinks. In 2016, a compromise was made by introducing a natural spring water swimming pool and installing air conditioning in the rooms. Additionally, visits to nearby sacred groves were included in the lodge's itinerary to enrich the overall experience.

These adaptations aimed to meet customer demands and enhance product development.



Fig 4. 3: Left–Natural swimming pool, Centre – Air-conditioned room, Right – Zip flying

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

In terms of place, the head office and marketing office were shifted from Margao to Panjim, the capital city of Goa, in 2016. This relocation was intended to leverage increased tourist traffic and further promote the business.

Price adjustments were made by transitioning from a single, all-inclusive pricing model to customized pricing. The initial uniform rate of ₹3500 for a single cottage for two people (including one night and two days with all meals and birding trails) was changed to ₹2500 for Bed and Breakfast (per night for two people). Additional offerings were charged separately based on the clients' preferences. This shift allowed for greater flexibility in pricing and catered to individual customer needs.

Promotional efforts were made through various channels. In 2019, Nature's Nest initiated a new venture called "Moving Forests," focused on producing documentary films on wildlife and promoting conservation awareness. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the project faced financial setbacks as investors pulled out, resulting in its shelving. The lodge also established ties with agencies such as Oyo, Expedia, and Trivago, which significantly contributed to their business, particularly attracting wildlife enthusiasts from metropolitan areas like Pune and Mumbai. Participation in international meetings and exhibitions, where other travel agencies set up stalls, was another avenue explored for promotion.

Regarding the people involved, Nature's Nest maintained a core team of dedicated and passionate nature enthusiasts who provided exceptional service to customers. However, when local individuals for hospitality roles, such as room boys

and cooks, were unavailable, Pankaj Lad had to employ staff from Maharashtra, which went against his principle of generating local employment. Nevertheless, these staff members were trained to interact amicably with clients, further enhancing customer service and garnering high ratings on social media platforms.

Nature's Nest also demonstrated its commitment to social entrepreneurship by establishing the Nature's Nest Conservation Centre after successfully completing 10 years of operation. The centre encompasses three participatory conservation projects, offering guests an opportunity to actively engage in conservation efforts.

Furthermore, the lodge engaged in philanthropic activities by empowering local women through the sale of homemade packaged sweets in the market, facilitated by Nature's Nest. Regular customer reviews and posts showcasing bird sightings, nature treks, and more were shared on their social media pages, solidifying their physical evidence as a functioning social enterprise.

The financial figures from 2014 onwards, as shown in Table 2, demonstrate an influx of funds in 2016.

Table 4. 2: Financial figures from 2014 to 2022

S. No	Particular's	Year	Ending						Covid Hit	Covid Hit
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Initial Investment	235000	190000	600000	350000	200000	150000			
1)	Number of Cottages	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	10
2)	Max Possible Occupancy(days /year)	2920	2920	2920	2920	2920	2920	3650	3650	3650
3)	Total days of booking /year	712	767	882	1042	1083	1222	1200	470	870
4)	Occupancy Rate	24.38%	26.27%	30.21%	35.68%	37.09%	41.85%	32.88%	12.88%	23.84%
5)	Total Revenue (Rs)	2644500	3249500	4500000	5500000	6500000	7200000	5100000	4500000	5750000
6)	Total Expenditure	2150000	2560000	3510000	4565000	5000000	5200000	4200000	3670000	6300000
7)	Profit Before Tax	494500	689500	990000	935000	1500000	2000000	900000	830000	-1968000
8)	Profit After Tax	346150	482650	693000	654500	1050000	1400000	812000	750000	-

Source: Pankaj Lad (17.12.2023)

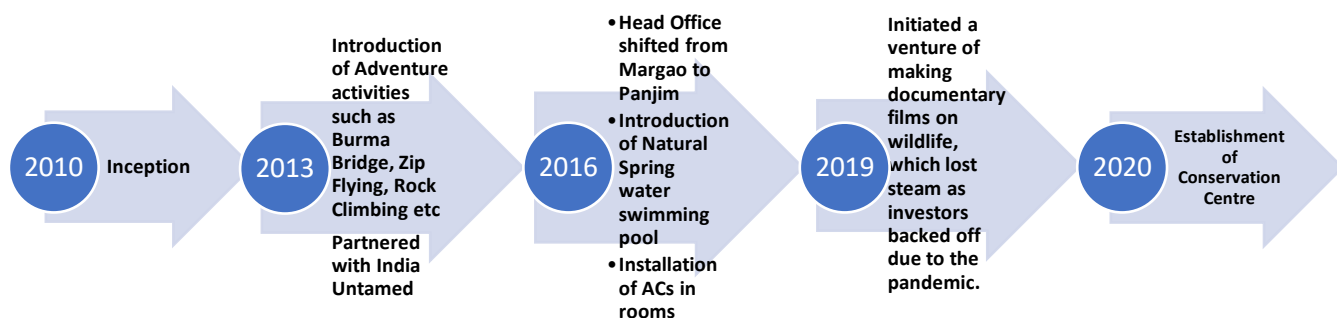


Fig 4. 4: A flow chart of the changes incorporated from inception till 2020

Source: Researcher's contribution

Resources at Nature's Nest

Tangible Resources

Physical Assets: Nature's Nest possesses a range of infrastructure and facilities that contribute to its distinctive guest experience by integrating local aesthetics and ecological considerations.

a) Cottages: The eco-lodge features village-style, mud-lined cottages, constructed to align with the natural surroundings of Tambdi Surla, Mollem. Initially in a dilapidated state, these cottages underwent extensive renovations, supported financially by the property owner. The choice of architectural style reflects an effort to provide an authentic experience while preserving the regional heritage.

b) Restaurant: 'The Kokum Tree' restaurant offers guests a selection of original and aesthetic Goan cuisine, incorporating locally sourced ingredients. The restaurant serves as an integral part of the guest experience, allowing visitors to engage with the culinary traditions of the region while promoting local economic support through ingredient sourcing.

c) Natural Spring Water Pool: Initially, concerns regarding ecological impact led to the decision to exclude a swimming pool. However, recognizing the expectations of a segment of tourists seeking recreational amenities, a natural spring water pool was

later introduced. This addition was designed to balance visitor preferences while minimizing ecological disruption.

d) **Adventure Equipment:** To diversify its offerings, Nature's Nest incorporated adventure activities in 2013, including zip flying, rock climbing, and rappelling. The procurement of specialized safety gear and adherence to safety protocols were integral to the implementation of these activities. These adventure options provide additional engagement opportunities for visitors while contributing to revenue diversification.

e) **Jeeps for Excursions:** Transport facilities, including jeeps, are utilized to conduct guided tours to sacred groves and conservation sites. These excursions enable visitors to explore the biodiversity and cultural significance of the region, with structured itineraries enhancing accessibility and experience quality.

Financial Resources: The financial trajectory of Nature's Nest has evolved since its inception, encompassing initial investments, revenue generation mechanisms, and capital reinvestment strategies.

a) **Initial Investment:** In 2010, Nature's Nest was established with an initial financial input comprising ₹20,000 in borrowed capital and ₹9,000 in personal equity. These funds were utilized to renovate the cottages and initiate operations, with subsequent financial support provided by the premises owner.

b) **Revenue Generation:** The financial sustainability of Nature's Nest is largely derived from guest bookings, adventure activity fees, and cooperative ventures. The diversification of revenue streams, including the introduction of nature-based and adventure activities, has contributed to financial resilience.

c) **Expansion Capital:** Financial resources have been allocated for strategic expansions, such as the relocation of the marketing office from Margao to Panjim in 2016. This move aimed to leverage higher tourist footfall and strengthen promotional efforts. Additionally, funds have been invested in facility upgrades and service enhancements, aligning with evolving guest expectations.

Intangible Resources

Human Capital: The expertise and experience of individuals associated with Nature's Nest constitute a vital resource influencing operational effectiveness.

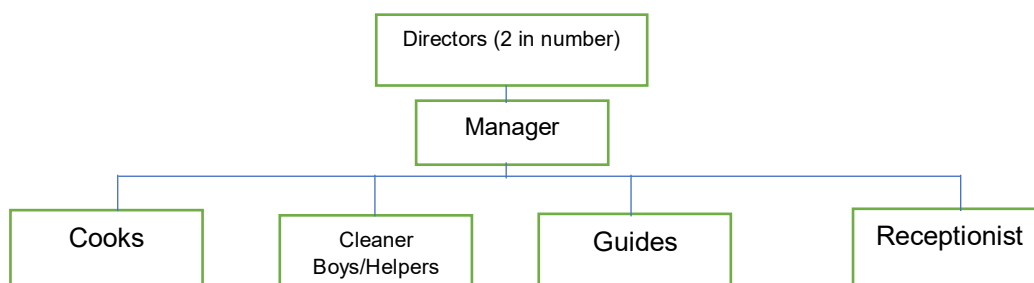
a) **Founders' Expertise:** The founders, Pankaj Lad and Ramesh Zharmekar, possess extensive knowledge of birdwatching, environmental conservation, and the local ecosystem. Their understanding of avian species, conservation practices, and ecotourism principles informs the core value proposition of Nature's Nest.



Fig 4. 5: Left – Pankaj Lad, Right – Ramesh Zharmekar
Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

b) **Local Workforce:** Staff members are predominantly recruited from Mollem and surrounding villages, providing employment opportunities within the local community. Their familiarity with regional biodiversity, cultural heritage, and traditional practices enhances guest interactions and service delivery.

c) **Environmentalists and Guides:** A team of environmentalists and guides play a key role in conducting educational tours and promoting responsible tourism practices. Their contributions include identifying flora and fauna, facilitating birdwatching experiences, and engaging guests in conservation-related discussions.



*Manager handles booking /itinerary of guests, accounts, MIS etc.

Fig 4. 6: Nature's Nest Organizational Structure

Source: Researcher's contribution

Brand Reputation: Nature's Nest has developed a distinct market presence by focusing on specialized offerings and sustainability-driven tourism.

a) Specialization in Birdwatching and Nature-based Activities: The eco-lodge has built recognition for its expertise in birdwatching, herping (reptile watching), and nature-oriented experiences. This specialization has attracted visitors seeking immersive and knowledge-driven tourism encounters.

b) Guest Experience and Positive Reviews: The emphasis on delivering a nature-centric experience has contributed to favourable guest feedback. Word-of-mouth recommendations and online reviews reinforce the positioning of Nature's Nest as a preferred destination for ecotourism enthusiasts.

c) Social Media and Digital Presence: Nature's Nest actively engages with audiences through digital platforms, showcasing wildlife sightings, nature treks, and conservation activities. This online presence enhances visibility and fosters direct engagement with prospective visitors.

Organizational Culture: Nature's Nest's operational philosophy is shaped by values emphasizing environmental responsibility, community engagement, and service quality. The eco-lodge's commitment to sustainable practices is reflected in its initiatives to minimize ecological impact, collaborate with local stakeholders, and promote conservation awareness among visitors.

a) Relationships and Networks: Establishing and maintaining collaborative relationships is essential for Nature's Nest's operational ecosystem.

b) Stakeholder Collaborations: Tie-up with platforms like Oyo, Expedia, and Trivago improved delivery of well-rounded and convenient travel packages to its guests (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021). Partnership with "India Untamed," a group specializing in animal and birding trails across India enabled the offering of integrated tourism packages, combining accommodation, travel, and guided experiences. Alliance with Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) strengthened linkages with local government bodies.

c) **Supplier Partnerships:** The eco-lodge collaborates with local farmers, artisans, and suppliers to procure food ingredients, handicrafts, and operational materials, reinforcing economic linkages within the community.

d) **Customer Engagement:** A focus on personalized guest interactions and tailored experiences fosters visitor retention and loyalty. Repeat guests and positive testimonials contribute to ongoing business sustainability.

Beyond these tangible and intangible assets, sustainable resource utilization plays a critical role in ensuring long-term operational viability. The integration of conservation-driven approaches, eco-friendly infrastructure management, and responsible tourism practices remains central to Nature's Nest's ongoing strategy.

Natural Resource Utilization

a) **Western Ghats:** As a UNESCO World Heritage Site and biodiversity hotspot, the Western Ghats provided Nature's Nest with a rich natural backdrop and a unique and diverse ecosystem, comprising of lush forests, rivers, waterfalls, and numerous plant and animal species. This mountain range is one of the world's eight hottest biodiversity hotspots, and it serves as a prime attraction for tourists seeking nature-based experiences. The presence of the Western Ghats near Nature's Nest provides a natural backdrop for the eco-lodge and offers guests the opportunity to explore and appreciate its ecological significance. The lodge leveraged this geographical advantage to attract eco-tourists and conservation-focused travellers.

b) **Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Tambdi Surla Temple:** The eco-lodge is flanked by the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and the Tambdi Surla temple, which cover a significant portion of the Mollem region. The sanctuary is home to various wildlife species, including deer, monkeys, Indian bison, and a wide array of bird species. It offers guests the chance to engage in wildlife spotting, nature walks, and jeep safaris. The presence of the sanctuary near Nature's Nest adds value to the tourism experience, providing visitors with opportunities to observe and appreciate the region's diverse flora and fauna. Another notable heritage attraction frequented by tourists during their stay at Nature's Nest is the historic monolithic Tambdi Surla

temple, constructed from basalt by the Kadamba Yadav dynasty in the 12th century (GTDC, 2023)

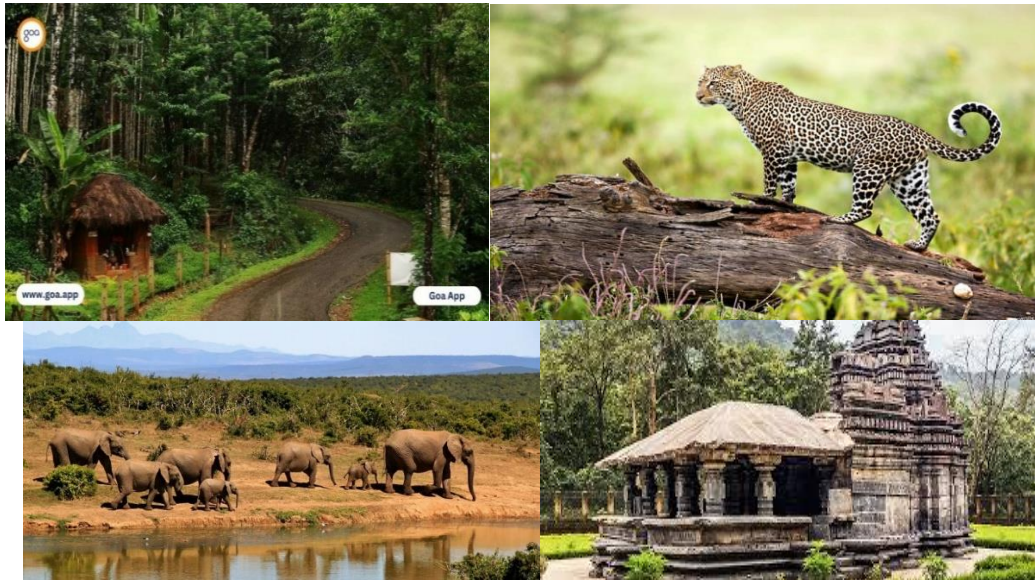


Fig 4. 7: Top Left–Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary, Top Right and Bottom Left – Wildlife at the sanctuary. Bottom Right – Tambdi Surla Temple

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

c) Sacred Groves: Another environmental asset near Nature's Nest is the presence of nearby sacred groves. These groves are characterized by their undisturbed and sacred status, where specific rituals and traditions are associated with their preservation. Sacred groves are often rich in biodiversity, harbouring rare and endemic plant and animal species. Nature's Nest includes visits to these sacred groves in its itineraries, allowing guests to experience the spiritual and ecological significance of these protected areas.

d) Natural Landscapes: The region surrounding Nature's Nest offers breathtaking natural landscapes. The diverse topography includes hills, valleys, rivers, and water bodies, creating picturesque scenery for visitors to enjoy. The natural landscapes provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as trekking, nature walks, and photography, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the beauty of the surroundings.

e) Biodiversity: The presence of a wide range of flora and fauna adds to the environmental assets of Nature's Nest. The region is known for its rich biodiversity,

including around 250 species of birds, butterflies, reptiles, and mammals. Guests at Nature's Nest can engage in birdwatching, reptile watching (herping), and butterfly spotting, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the region's diverse wildlife. The resort has to its credit, visitation by renowned environmentalists; Romulus Whitekar being one of them from 'Discovery' channel (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021); to capture the bird, animal and plant life endemic to the region.



Fig 4. 8: Left – Romulus Whitekar; Centre and Right- Biodiversity at Nature's Nest

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

Strategic Initiatives and Innovations

a) Sacred Grove Visitations: Recognizing the cultural and ecological significance of sacred groves, Nature's Nest incorporated visits to these protected areas into its itineraries. This initiative provided guests with an educational and immersive experience, fostering environmental awareness and appreciation for local traditions. However, the trails are suspended during winter as a response to the unanticipated challenge of mites and ticks. Though winters are the peak tourist season, this step was necessary to address the issue.

b) Introduction of a Natural Spring Water Swimming Pool: While initially avoiding the provision of a swimming pool due to concerns about noise and disturbance to wildlife, Nature's Nest later introduced a natural spring water swimming pool. In response to changing customer preferences, Nature's Nest introduced a 'non-chlorinated' swimming pool utilizing natural spring water. This feature balanced guest comfort with ecological sustainability, catering to leisure-seeking tourists while preserving environmental integrity.

c) Early Morning and Late-Night Birding Trails: The core team at Nature's Nest recognized the potential to offer unique birding experiences during early morning and late-night hours. These special birding/nightlife trails were developed through research and development efforts to cater to guests who have a specific interest in observing nocturnal species and exploring the natural world at night. These trails capitalized on



Fig 4. 9: Top Left– Early morning birding trail, Top Right – Night trail, Middle Left – Indian Gaur spotted during the night trail, Middle right- Brown palmed Civet captured during night trail, Bottom – Bird at the waterhole captured at night

Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

the region's rich biodiversity, offering unique opportunities for guests to observe nocturnal species and enhance their understanding of avian and ecological diversity.

d) Establishment of Conservation Centres: A key long-term sustainability initiative was the creation of conservation centres, encouraging active guest participation in environmental conservation projects. These centres served as platforms for education and awareness, reinforcing Nature's Nest's commitment to ecological preservation.



Fig 4. 10: Top Left– Wildlife drinking water at the waterhole, Top Right – Waterhole, Bottom – Camera placed near the waterhole for documentation.
Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

e) Process Innovation: One example of process innovation was the introduction of adventure activities and the cooperative venture with "India Untamed" in 2013. These additions aimed to engage pleasure-seeking tourists and boost financials. By incorporating these activities and partnerships, Nature's Nest expanded its offerings and diversified its revenue streams. The implementation of adventure activities such as wall climbing, rappelling, fox flying, zip flying, and Burma bridge required the development of new operational processes and practices. Nature's Nest had to establish safety protocols, training programs for staff members, and efficient

scheduling systems to manage these activities effectively and ensure a seamless experience for guests.

Moreover, the cooperative venture with "India Untamed" involved collaboration with another organization specializing in animal and birding trails across India. This partnership required Nature's Nest to establish coordination mechanisms, communication channels, and streamlined processes to refer tourists interested in trekking in other parts of the country to "India Untamed" while directing those interested in exploring the hinterlands of Goa to Nature's Nest.

Sustainable Resource Management Practices

Sustainable resource management practices are a vital variable that emphasizes Nature's Nest's commitment to responsible utilization and conservation of natural resources. These practices encompass various initiatives implemented by the eco-lodge to promote environmental sustainability, waste management, energy conservation, and ecological preservation.

a) **Waste Management:** Nature's Nest prioritizes waste management practices to minimize its environmental impact. The eco-lodge implements a comprehensive waste management system that includes segregation, recycling, and proper disposal of waste materials. Wet waste is recycled at the resort and used as manure. At times, the wet waste generated by the resort is collected by local piggeries to be used as livestock feed. The management of these piggeries has noted that, unlike waste collected from other resorts, the wet waste from Nature's Nest can be directly utilized as animal feed. This is attributed to the resort's meticulous waste segregation practices, ensuring that only suitable organic waste is included, thereby maintaining hygiene and quality standards. Dry waste is sent to a nearby location at Nessai for further processing.

b) **Energy Conservation:** Nature's Nest prioritizes sustainable energy management by implementing various conservation strategies aimed at reducing energy consumption while maintaining guest comfort. The resort integrates renewable energy sources, energy-efficient appliances, and guest education initiatives to promote responsible energy usage.

- **Solar Energy Utilization:** Nature's Nest is committed to energy conservation and employs various strategies to minimize its energy consumption. The eco-lodge incorporates energy-efficient technologies, such as solar-powered systems, where feasible.
- **Energy-Efficient Appliances:** The resort has replaced conventional air conditioning units with green, energy-saving models that consume less electricity while maintaining optimal cooling.
- **Guest Awareness Campaigns:** Recognizing that sustainable energy practices require collective participation; Nature's Nest actively encourages guests to adopt energy-saving habits during their stay. The resort also organizes interactive sessions on eco-friendly practices, allowing visitors to learn about the tangible impact of small energy-saving actions. Through these efforts, Nature's Nest aims to instill a sense of responsibility among tourists, ensuring that sustainability remains a shared goal.

c) **Water Conservation:** Water conservation is a key aspect of sustainable resource management at Nature's Nest. The eco-lodge implements measures to optimize water usage, such as rainwater harvesting and awareness campaigns for guests on responsible water usage. Rainwater harvesting is done through collection and storage of rainwater to supplement water usage and reduce dependence on groundwater sources. Responsible water usage campaigns involve educating staff and guests on water conservation practices.

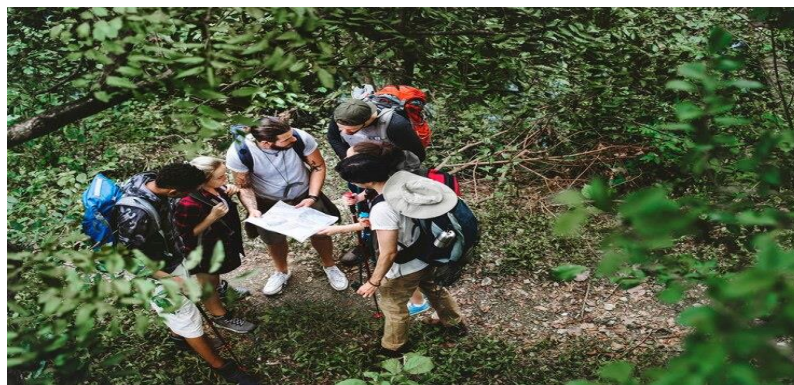


Fig 4. 11: Volunteer for water conservation at Nature's Nest
Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

d. Ecological Preservation

- **Reforestation and Habitat Restoration:** Active participation in afforestation programs to maintain the natural ecosystem. The eco-lodge actively engages in initiatives to protect and restore natural habitats, including reforestation projects, preservation of sacred groves, and participation in ecological research and monitoring.
- **Conservation Research:** Collaborating with environmental organizations for biodiversity studies and habitat protection.
- **Sustainable Landscaping:** Using native plant species to maintain ecological balance and reduce maintenance requirements. Indigenous vegetation helps prevent soil erosion and improves water retention, making the landscape more resilient to seasonal changes and extreme weather conditions.

e) Environmental Education

- **Guided Nature Walks:** Conducted by trained naturalists to educate guests on local flora and fauna and the importance of ecological preservation, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable practices.
- **Interactive Learning Sessions:** Nature's Nest actively promotes environmental awareness and responsible tourism through interactive learning sessions. These workshops and discussions focus on key topics such as sustainable tourism, conservation, and responsible travel. Designed for guests, students, and corporate groups, these sessions provide valuable insights into the importance of preserving natural ecosystems while engaging in tourism activities. As part of its commitment to education, Nature's Nest collaborates with environmentalists, wildlife experts, and conservation researchers to conduct these sessions. Guests are introduced to best practices in eco-tourism, including minimizing their ecological footprint, respecting wildlife habitats, and supporting local conservation initiatives. The discussions also explore the impact of human activities on biodiversity and offer practical solutions for mitigating environmental degradation. Nature's Nest extends these interactive sessions to local communities, empowering them with knowledge about sustainable practices and eco-friendly business opportunities. Through capacity-building initiatives, the resort supports community-led conservation efforts, fostering a shared responsibility for environmental stewardship.

Additionally, the sessions incorporate experiential learning, where participants engage in hands-on activities such as tree planting, habitat restoration projects, and wildlife monitoring exercises. This approach helps bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing visitors to develop a deeper appreciation for the environment and their role in its preservation. Furthering its outreach, employees and environmentalists from Nature's Nest actively visit schools to educate students on the significance of plant and animal life preservation. These visits aim to instil environmental consciousness at a young age, encouraging children to appreciate and protect their natural surroundings. During summer vacations, batches of students from various schools are invited to Nature's Nest for immersive learning experiences. These programs offer a unique blend of education and recreation, where students learn about plant and animal life within the premises, observe metamorphosis processes of butterflies, frogs, and other species through hands-on activities and live samples, and engage in conservation exercises. To complement the educational experience, the program also includes leisure activities such as swimming and adventure sports, ensuring a well-rounded and enjoyable learning experience for young participants.



Fig 4. 12: Summer camp for students at Nature's Nest – experiential learning the fun way.
Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

Community Engagement Programs

Nature's Nest strongly believes in fostering a symbiotic relationship between tourism and local communities by encouraging their active participation in conservation and sustainable tourism initiatives. The resort's community engagement programs aim to empower local residents with opportunities to contribute to

environmental preservation while also benefiting economically from eco-tourism activities.

One such initiative is the *Otter Conservation Project*, where both locals and tourists are invited to take part in efforts to protect and study this near-extinct species. Participants can contribute in multiple ways, including financial support for habitat restoration, tracking devices, and awareness campaigns. Additionally, volunteers can assist conservationists in data collection by documenting otter sightings, tracking their movement patterns, and monitoring water quality in their natural habitats.



Fig 4. 13: Otter conservation project of Nature's Nest.
Source: (Natures Nest Goa, n.d)

To make these projects more accessible, Nature's Nest organizes periodic awareness sessions where experts educate participants on the significance of otters in maintaining ecological balance. Beyond otter conservation, Nature's Nest encourages community-led initiatives such as tree planting, waste management drives, and biodiversity mapping.

Sustainable Tourism and Livelihood Programs

In addition to conservation efforts, Nature's Nest actively promotes sustainable tourism projects that enhance the economic well-being of the local community. The resort supports women-led micro-enterprises by encouraging local women to manufacture traditional home-cooked food items such as laddoos, papads, and pickles, which are sold at the resort premises. These initiatives provide an additional source of income for rural women while also allowing guests to experience authentic local flavours.

Similarly, the resort promotes local craftsmanship by facilitating the sale of cane and bamboo handicrafts made by artisans from nearby villages. These handcrafted items are displayed and sold both at the resort and during guided village visits, allowing tourists to directly engage with artisans and appreciate their skills.

However, the extent of participation varied. While many locals embraced the initiative, some were hesitant to engage, either due to a lack of awareness about ecotourism's benefits or personal apprehensions about shifting away from traditional occupations. Additionally, reliance on local labour sometimes proved unpredictable, with certain employees taking extended leave for family functions, necessitating workforce adjustments by hiring staff from neighbouring states.

Navigating Operational Realities in an Eco-Sensitive Environment

Running an eco-tourism venture in a biodiversity-rich region requires balancing guest comfort with environmental preservation. Given its location in the heart of nature, Nature's Nest offers an immersive experience where guests coexist with the surrounding ecosystem. However, this proximity to wildlife sometimes leads to unexpected interactions. Occasionally, guests encounter small lizards in their rooms—harmless creatures that are a natural part of the habitat. While many nature enthusiasts appreciate such encounters, some guests unfamiliar with the region's fauna find them unsettling. The resort management remains proactive in addressing these concerns by educating visitors on the ecological role of these species and taking preventive measures such as routine inspections and sealing potential entry points with wire meshes.

Another occasional challenge arises from water supply fluctuations, particularly during periods of increased occupancy or seasonal shortages. Given the resort's commitment to sustainable resource management, water conservation practices are strictly followed. While measures such as rainwater harvesting and efficient water usage help mitigate these concerns, sporadic supply limitations do occur. In such instances, guests are encouraged to adopt responsible water usage habits, reinforcing the resort's eco-conscious ethos.

By embracing these realities, Nature's Nest continues to refine its operations, ensuring that its sustainability goals align with guest expectations while maintaining harmony with the environment.

Government Policies and External Pressures

While Nature's Nest thrived as a model of sustainable tourism, external developments posed significant concerns. For instance, the proposed Tamnar Power Project threatened the ecological integrity of the region. The project required road widening and would have led to the closure of the Mahadev Wildlife Sanctuary (Goa News, 2022)—one of the key attractions that drew nature enthusiasts to Nature's Nest. However, due to the active participation of environmentalists and conservation groups, the project was eventually shelved. Despite this victory, such policy-related uncertainties remain an ongoing challenge for ecotourism ventures operating in environmentally sensitive areas.

Seasonal Fluctuations in Tourism Demand

Nature's Nest experiences significant seasonal variations in visitor numbers, with peak seasons bringing high occupancy rates and off-seasons leading to reduced footfall. The monsoon period, in particular, sees a decline in tourist arrivals due to heavy rains, making it difficult to maintain consistent revenue stream. The resort introduces off-season activities such as workshops and research collaborations during this lean period. Repair and maintenance of the cottages and premise surroundings happen during the rainy season.

Wildlife-Human Interaction Management

Operating in a biodiversity-rich region brings challenges related to human-wildlife interactions. While the presence of a variety of species enhances the tourism experience, occasional encounters with wildlife near the resort require careful management to ensure guest safety while protecting the animals. The resort continuously educates visitors on responsible behaviour, but ensuring compliance remains an ongoing effort.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Issues

Nature's Nest operates within a protected ecological zone, requiring adherence to strict environmental regulations. Obtaining permits for expansion, adhering to conservation guidelines, and addressing bureaucratic requirements often lead to delays and increased operational complexity. The evolving legal framework for ecotourism also necessitates regular adaptation to new policies, sometimes at significant financial costs. Projects like Nature's Nest are affected by these policies and acts from the central government viz - Forest Conservation Act (1980); National Forest Policy (1988); National Ecotourism Policy (2004); National Wildlife Action Plan :2017-2031 (2019); Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill (2023).

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

Changes in climate patterns, unpredictable weather conditions, and deforestation in surrounding areas pose long-term risks to the ecosystem that Nature's Nest depends on. The gradual impact of rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and habitat loss can affect local biodiversity, potentially reducing the region's appeal as a nature-based tourism destination.

Case 2: Aangan

Aangan is a community-based tourism project that promotes homestays and strawberry cultivation in the remote village of Verlem in the Sanguem sub-district of the South Goa district in Goa. The village comes under the biodiversity hotspot and is situated 570 metres above sea level within the Netravali wildlife sanctuary. The village is populated predominantly by the Velip tribe community. The total population is 568 out of which 268 are males and 300 females (State Census, 2011). The total geographical area of the village is 5413 hectares (Indian Village Directory, 2019). Agriculture and dairy farming are their primary source of livelihood.



Fig 4.14: Agriculture and Dairy farming at Aangan
Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

The village is situated between two waterfalls, Sawri and Mainapi. A village temple, serving as a communal gathering space for important meetings, is located in close proximity. Additionally, a primary school is available within the village; however, for secondary education (beginning from the fifth standard), students must commute to a school in the nearby town using government-operated buses.

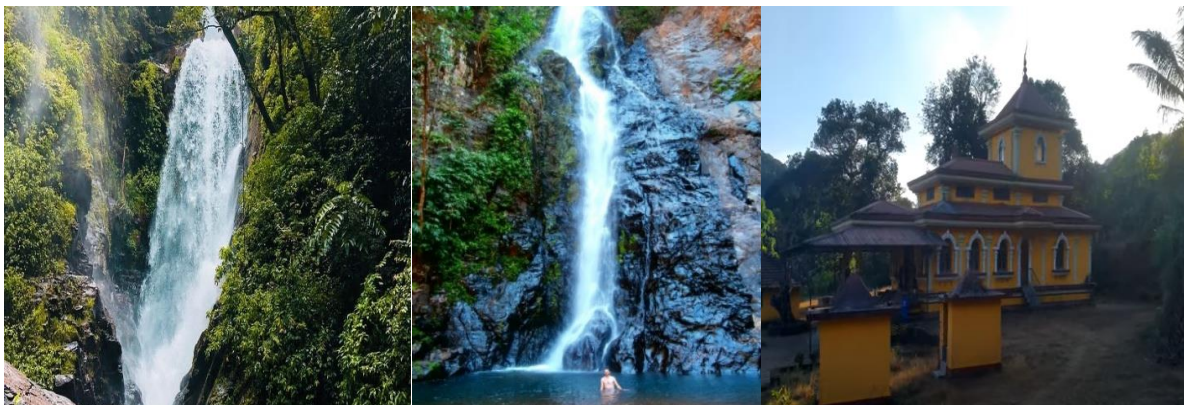


Fig 4. 15: Left – Sawri waterfall, Middle – Mainapi waterfall, Right – Village temple
Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

Apart from agriculture and dairy farming, many villagers were also employed in the mining sector. However, due to a Supreme court ruling the mining operations in the area were halted in 2012. The closure of the mining industry brought about financial uncertainties for the villagers, who had relied on the mining sector for additional income. The industry body of the mine owners, namely the Goa Mine Ore Owners Association, through its corporate social responsibility non-governmental organization arm – the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG), decided to help the people by establishing Verlem Eco-tourism Cooperative society.

The Beginning

In 2013, the MSFG embarked on a transformative journey to empower the villagers and support sustainable alternatives to mining. Recognizing the potential of Verlem's hilly terrain and cold climate for strawberry cultivation, the MSFG provided technical assistance to the villagers and initiated a remarkable project to harness the village's tourism potential. Alongside strawberry farming, the MSFG sought to establish a community-led tourism model, aptly named Aangan, that would embrace the village's rustic charm and cultural heritage while promoting eco-tourism and homestays.



Fig 4.16: Top – Aangan's office with an exterior nameplate

Bottom Left – Homestay, Bottom center – Room at the homestay, Right – Tourists near the home stay Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

Initial steps were taken to introduce the villagers to the art of strawberry farming, with a learning visit to Choukul, a village in Maharashtra known for its successful strawberry cultivation. The NGO team provided the technical support. Given their existing agricultural expertise, villagers seamlessly integrated strawberry cultivation into their farming practices. Encouraged by the bountiful harvest within six months, more villagers joined the cooperative, fostering a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility. This location is the sole site in Goa where strawberry cultivation is practiced.



Fig 4.17: Bountiful strawberry harvest at Aangan
Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

The NGO also started the home stay project with five cottages. No separate cottages or rooms were built for the home. The guest was expected to enjoy the rustic character of the village by staying with the locals in their houses and consume home cooked food. Proper beds, new linen and washrooms were upgraded (Kamat Maad, 2014). A tour guide was to accompany the tourists at all times to ensure their safety.



Fig 4.18: Left – Tulsi sapling outside the homestay, Center – Kitchen at the homestay, Right – rustic appearance outside the home stay

Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

The vision for Aangan went beyond mere homestays; it aspired to create a sustainable tourism ecosystem that would enrich the lives of the villagers while preserving the region's rich biodiversity. The plans initially faced resistance from the local community. The villagers were aware of the ill effects of tourism. They feared that their youth would get distracted and may go astray. Moreover, they were apprehensive about their religious beliefs and rituals being questioned (Kamat Maad, 2014b). However, persistent efforts by the MSFG team and the unwavering dedication of environmentalists like Parag Rangnekar (the state coordinator for Goa of the Indian Bird Conservation Network - IBCN) gradually won the villagers' trust and support.



Fig 4.19: Left – Key environmentalists who significantly influenced the establishment of Aangan

Left to Right– Parag Rangnekar, Shraddha Rangnekar, Sangam Patil, Shivdas Dessai

Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (27.3.2024)

Development of Aangan's Community Tourism Initiative

Environmentalists Parag Rangnekar, Shraddha Rangnekar, Shivdas Dessai, and Sangam Patil had been documenting the region's biodiversity and frequently visiting the area even before the conceptualization of Aangan's community tourism project. Their observations highlighted the untapped tourism potential of the region, as adventure seekers, trekkers, and international visitors were already exploring the area. However, these activities provided limited benefits to the local community.

The socio-economic landscape of the village changed significantly following the ban on mining in Goa in 2012. Many villagers, who had relied on mining as a supplementary income source, faced financial challenges. While agriculture remained their primary occupation, the absence of mining revenue created economic uncertainty. Recognizing tourism as a potential alternative, Parag Rangnekar proposed a community-based tourism model to support local livelihoods. The idea was presented to both the villagers and the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG), an organization aimed at mitigating the economic impact of the mining ban on affected communities.

During the initial stages of exploring hinterland tourism opportunities, it became evident that Verlem village was part of a cluster of hamlets, including Tudav and Salgini. The socio-cultural and logistical characteristics of each village played a critical role in shaping the direction of the Aangan initiative.

In Tudav, cultural traditions strongly influenced decision-making. The most senior resident, referred to as "Zanto," was highly respected among the Velip tribe and held significant authority within the community. His perspectives on tourism were conservative, particularly regarding the accommodation of outsiders with diverse religious backgrounds in local homes. Given his strong opposition, the environmentalists decided to respect the village's stance and refrained from further engagement, while keeping the possibility open for future participation by younger generations. Salgini, in contrast, faced logistical challenges. The village had a high rate of outmigration, with most working-age residents living elsewhere for employment

and returning only periodically. The population primarily consisted of elderly residents and children, making the implementation of a homestay-based tourism model unfeasible despite the area's natural beauty.

Given these considerations, Verlem was identified as the most suitable location for the community tourism initiative due to its demographic composition and relative openness to the concept. However, initial reactions from the villagers were cautious. Their perceptions of tourism were shaped by the challenges associated with mainstream tourism, including commercialization and social issues such as alcoholism. There were concerns that tourism might divert the younger generation away from traditional agricultural practices. Moreover, as protectors of forests with sacred groves and deep-rooted beliefs, villagers feared that tourists might not respect their cultural and ecological heritage. To address these reservations, discussions were facilitated, drawing upon successful eco-tourism models from other regions, including Sikkim and the neighbouring village of Choukul. A visit to Choukul, where eco-tourism had been integrated with strawberry farming, provided the villagers with a tangible example of how tourism could complement rather than disrupt existing livelihoods. Gradually, engagement with the local youth and sustained dialogue helped build trust and interest in the initiative.

After extensive deliberation, the community opted for a cooperative model, inspired by their prior experience with a government-supported milk cooperative. This decision was formalized following discussions in the village temple, a central space for community meetings. The younger members of the village played a crucial role in advocating for the initiative, emphasizing the commitment demonstrated by the environmentalists, who consistently engaged with the community well beyond standard working hours. Following these discussions, a consensus was reached, and the decision to establish Aangan as a cooperative community-based tourism project was finalized in a late-night meeting at the temple premises.

The process of building relationships, earning community trust, and structuring the initiative spanned approximately two years. This period was essential in laying the groundwork for Aangan's community tourism model, which sought to balance environmental conservation with economic development through local participation. Thus, realizing that tourism projects in the nearby area were inevitable, the villagers

permitted the MSFG to establish a cooperative society in the lines of the milk co-operative that the villagers successfully ran. This community-based tourism project at Verlem was named Aangan.

To ensure the smooth administrative functioning the 'Verlem Eco-tourism Cooperative Society' was formed with twenty-two (22) members. Under the umbrella of society, the following activities were undertaken.

1. Five homestays were created with initial financial help of ₹ 7 lacs from MSFG.
2. Five self-help groups (SHGs) were formed. They would cater to groups of tourists coming on day trips with authentic rustic cuisine.
3. Guides were trained who would take tourists on treks.
4. Local products such as honey, 'dhoop' (incense) were sold through the society at a profit of 10-15% margin.

Despite its remarkable achievements, the project's sustainability has remained a primary concern due to its low volume of tourists. However, the innovative revenue-sharing model, wherein tourists pay Rs. 900 per day, with the homestay owner receiving Rs. 500, the guides receiving Rs. 300, and the society receiving Rs. 100, has ensured a fair distribution of income (Fig 4.20 below).

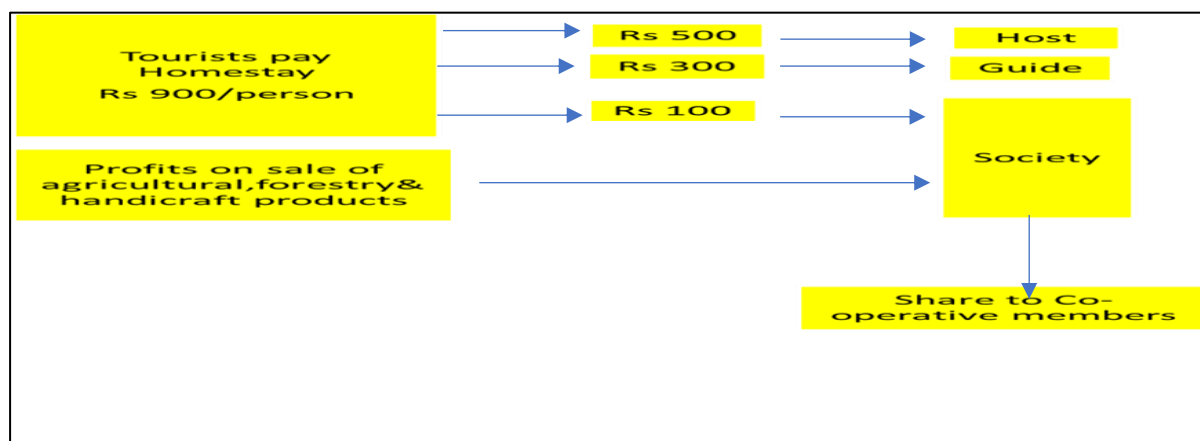


Fig 4.20: Revenue Sharing Model

Source: Researcher's own elaboration. Data Source: MSFG personnel, 2013; Kamat Maad, 2014

To further safeguard the project's integrity and authenticity, Aangan operates under the jurisdiction of the Government of Goa's forest department, which charges a nominal entry fee of Rs. 20 at the village's entrance.

The success of Aangan was not only measured in financial terms but also by its impact on the preservation of the village's culture, traditions, and natural surroundings. With strict 'No Alcohol' and 'Carry your own plastic garbage back' policies in place, the project ensured that it would not compromise the conservative Velip elders' values and beliefs. As the Aangan community tourism model flourished, it targeted families, trekkers, birders, nature enthusiasts, and educational tourists, aiming to attract a diverse and responsible clientele. Through strategic partnerships with tour operators, Aangan began to witness a steady flow of visitors, providing not only revenue but also an opportunity for cultural exchange.

Growth

With the foundation laid and the spirit of community-driven tourism soaring high, Aangan embarked on a journey of growth and exploration, seeking to create an impact in the realm of sustainable tourism. The pristine landscapes of Verlem and the warmth of its Velip community began to attract a diverse set of tourists, eager to immerse themselves in the authentic charm of rural Goa.

At the heart of Aangan's growth lay its unique settings and the relentless dedication of its core team of environmentalists. Surrounded by the breathtaking biodiversity of the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, the village offered an unparalleled experience to nature enthusiasts, birdwatchers, and adventure seekers. The dedicated team of environmentalists, including Parag Rangnekar, Shraddha Rangnekar, Shivdas Dessai, and Sangam Patil, poured their passion into documenting the region's wildlife and advocating for its conservation.



Fig 4.21: Documentation of the region's wildlife

Source: Parag Rangnekar's documentation of his works in Goa (Electronic Source)

The journey towards growth was not without its challenges. Among them was the perception among some villagers that the society was not making enough money as an institution, leading to a lack of belief and participation in the project. To overcome this, Aangan focused on transparent communication and regular updates on the project's financial performance, emphasizing/ng the broader benefits it brought to the community beyond monetary gains. The cooperative society was to ensure that the profits reaped by the project remain with the society and are shared with the villagers. Every villager had the right to buy the shares and the dividends were shared by the shareholders.

As Aangan continued to serve its existing clientele with nature activities and homestays, it explored growth strategies. Aangan embraced product development by venturing into activities beyond traditional homestays. Innovations like milking cows with tourists, strawberry cultivation experiences, village tours, birding trails, treks to the nearby 'Sawri' and 'Mainapi' waterfalls, authentic rural culinary delicacies served to large day visitation groups, knowledge-sharing sessions on medicinal plants enriched the offerings and catered to diverse segments of visitors.



Fig 4.22: Diversification of offerings at Aangan

Top left: Milking of cows – opportunity given to tourists as well; Top centre: Village tour; Top right: Wild animal spotting and photography
 Bottom left: Rural food for student groups Bottom right: Aangan's office where dhoop, honey etc products were stocked and sold to tourists

Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (23.7.2023)

Organizational capabilities, including a rotation policy to ensure equal opportunities for homestays and niche customer differentiation, further fortified Aangan's competitive advantage. Its marketing strategy centred around positive word-of-mouth publicity and repeat customers, fostering a loyal and engaged customer base. The society has also tied up with few tour operators (Kamat Maad, 2014b).

Table 4. 3: Financial performance of Aangan from 2013 to 2019 –

Particulars	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Initial Investment	6,99,853	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of Cottages	5	5	5	5	5	6	6
Max Possible Occupancy (days/year) for five cottages		300	300	300	300	300	300
Total days of booking/year for five cottages		20	44	31	25	27	13
Occupancy Rate in percentage		6.67	14.67	10.33	8.33	9	4.33
Total Revenue for homestays (Rs)		74,340	1,75,215	2,69,961	1,30,872	3,19,555	37,400
Amount to the hosts		50,960	96,965	1,61,629	83,655	2,27,780	2860
Amount to the guides		9,700	21,900	18,000	11,450	14,810	1050
No of Guides		4	4	4	4	4	3
Income /Guide		2,425	5,475	4,500	2,863	3702	350
Amount to the society		13,680	56,350	90,332	35,767	76,965	33,490

Source: Accounts Department – Aangan, 11.3.2022

Aangan's Financial Journey

a) Aangan's Social Responsibility: Aangan stands as a proof to "Corporate Social Responsibility" driven by the Mineral Foundation of Goa, offering partial rehabilitation to villagers affected by the closure of mines. In 2013, a notable initial investment of Rs. 6,99,853 was made to kickstart this transformative community tourism project. The unique aspect of Aangan's financial journey is the absence of any burden to repay this initial investment, signifying the sustainable and self-sufficient nature of the project

b) Embracing Sustainable Practices: With a focus on striking a balance between tourism and traditional livelihoods, Aangan adopted a distinctive policy for its five cottages. Each cottage is made available for tourism only for two nights per week, allowing the residents to actively engage in agricultural activities during the remaining days. This rotation policy ensures that tourism enhances livelihoods without disrupting

the village's agricultural rhythm. Moreover, each cottage is let out for a total of 25 days per month, resulting in an annual occupancy of 300 days.

Figures Explanation:

- a) The financial performance table showcases the yearly occupancy rate of Aangan's cottages from 2014 to 2019, reflecting the increasing demand for the authentic rural experience offered by the homestays.
- b) The total revenue earned from homestays demonstrates the gradual growth of Aangan as a preferred destination for nature enthusiasts and tourists seeking an immersive cultural encounter.
- c) The revenue distribution among hosts, guides, and the society exemplifies the project's commitment to equitable sharing of profits within the community, empowering residents and fostering a sense of ownership.

Decline

The year 2017 saw the first sign of conflict between the villagers who were not directly involved in the project and those who were in the homestay business. The conflict was created due to groups and political affiliations. Political polarisation led to some villagers supporting a leader who was not running the homestay business. He bred suspicion into a few villagers' minds that those running the homestay business were not contributing their percentage to society. The lack of trust among villagers adversely affected the project. This rift was brought to the notice of the NGO. Timely intervention of the NGO resolved the conflict.

The conflict was also due to the lack of participation by the entire community, as only five homestay families benefited from the project. To be self-sufficient, the project needed a leader, a villager with leadership skills, and well-versed in the finances and working processes (planning and decision making) of Aangan. The NGO could not identify such a person and had to dedicate its personnel to the village.

Around 2018, the Government started giving free doles to the youth, and free strawberry seedlings brought inertia and laziness among the youth. The competitive spirit needed to run a business was killed through the 'free scheme'. In addition, the Covid 19 pandemic shut down tourism activities. The homestay project has not seen a recovery post-pandemic.

The government has started apple cultivation in the village on an experimental basis besides strawberries and cauliflower (Harmalkar, 2023). The apple cultivation project has a gestation period of 2 years and will show results only in 2025.

Resources at Aangan

Tangible Resources:

a) Cottages: At the heart of the Aangan initiative were five homestay cottages. Designed to reflect the simplicity and cultural essence of village life, these units were equipped with basic bedding and linen, offering tourists a comfortable yet rustic experience. The cottages followed local cultural norms by having separate, upgraded external washrooms instead of attached bathrooms, thereby maintaining authenticity without compromising hygiene.

b) Infrastructure and Amenities: Apart from the cottages, minor infrastructure support such as kitchen spaces for traditional cooking, outdoor seating, and minimal signage contributed to the tourist experience. The emphasis was on low-impact structures that blended with the natural environment rather than commercialized tourism setups.

b) Financial Support from MSFG: The successful establishment of the homestays and cooperative society was made possible through the initial financial support of ₹7 lakhs from the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG). This capital infusion played a crucial role in kickstarting the transformative community tourism project in Verlem village. The financial assistance enabled Aangan to build the necessary infrastructure, including the cottages, to initiate the community-led tourism model. The funding not only helped create physical assets but also laid the foundation for a sustainable revenue-sharing model that benefited various stakeholders.

c) Revenue-Sharing Model: Aangan's revenue-sharing model was a significant aspect of its tangible resource management. This model was carefully designed to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of income among key participants, fostering a sense of ownership and empowerment within the community. Under this model, tourists paid ₹900 per day for their stay, and the revenue was distributed among different parties involved in the project. Homestay owners received ₹500 per day, compensating them for providing lodging and hospitality. The guides who accompanied tourists on treks

received ₹300 per day for their services. Lastly, the society itself received ₹100 per day, contributing to the overall sustainability and development of the project.

Intangible Resources:

a) Expert Environmentalists: The success of Aangan can be largely attributed to the unwavering dedication and expertise of environmentalists like Parag Rangnekar, Shraddha Rangnekar, Shivdas Dessai, and Sangam Patil. These individuals possess in-depth knowledge and experience in wildlife conservation, biodiversity, and sustainable tourism practices. Their passion for the environment and commitment to preserving the village's natural beauty and cultural heritage were instrumental in shaping the project's vision and mission. Drawing upon their expertise, Aangan was able to design and offer unique nature-based activities, such as guided treks, birdwatching tours, and educational sessions on medicinal plants.

b) Community Support and Cultural Compatibility: The operational model of Aangan aligned with the values of the Velip tribal community, promoting alcohol-free stays and eco-friendly behaviour. This alignment strengthened local acceptance of the project and built a sense of pride and ownership among community members.

c) Positive Brand Reputation: Aangan established a positive brand reputation that became a key intangible resource driving its success. The brand's identity was closely aligned with the values and beliefs of the local community, particularly the Velip tribe, who saw Aangan as a project that respected their religious beliefs and rituals.

d) Attracting a Responsible Clientele: Aangan's brand reputation, built on the foundation of responsible and sustainable tourism, resonated with a niche and responsible clientele. Nature enthusiasts, cultural travellers, and those seeking an authentic experience sought out Aangan due to its reputation for authenticity and ethical practices. This responsible clientele became advocates for Aangan, generating positive word-of-mouth publicity and contributing to its loyal and engaged customer base.

e) Cultural Preservation and Authenticity: The intangible resource of cultural preservation and authenticity differentiated Aangan from mainstream tourist offerings. The project's emphasis on community-led tourism and homestays provided tourists with an authentic glimpse into the lives of the Velip tribe. By staying with the locals and

consuming home-cooked food, tourists were immersed in the village's rustic charm and cultural heritage. As a result, Aangan's guests felt more connected to the village and its people, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the local way of life.

f) Social, Economic and Environmental Impact: Aangan's intangible resources were not limited to attracting tourists but also extended to its broader social, economic and environmental impact. The project's commitment to empowering the local community through the revenue-sharing model and equitable profit distribution instilled a sense of ownership and economic well-being among the villagers. Also, Aangan's emphasis on sustainable resource management and responsible utilization of natural assets contributed to the preservation of the village's environmental assets.

Innovation Resources:

a) Milking Cows with Tourists: Aangan's innovative approach to tourism included an activity that allowed tourists to experience the traditional rural lifestyle firsthand by milking cows alongside the local villagers. This unique activity not only provided tourists with an immersive cultural encounter but also gave them a sense of participation and connection with the local community and gave them a memorable and enriching experience.

b) Strawberry Cultivation Experiences: Leveraging the expertise gained from successful strawberry cultivation, Aangan offered tourists the opportunity to participate in the process of strawberry farming. Visitors were involved in hands-on experiences during harvesting, gaining insights into sustainable agriculture practices and the challenges faced by farmers. This innovative agricultural tourism initiative not only contributed to the villagers' additional income but also promoted awareness of sustainable farming and the importance of supporting local agriculture.

c) Village Tours: Aangan's village tours took tourists on a guided journey through Verlem village, providing an authentic and in-depth exploration of its cultural heritage, historical landmarks, and traditional practices. Visitors had the chance to interact with the local residents, witness cultural ceremonies, and learn about the village's rich history. This cultural tour allowed tourists to go beyond the usual tourist attractions and develop a deeper appreciation for the Velip tribe's way of life.

d) Birding Trails: Recognizing the biodiversity hotspot of Verlem village, Aangan introduced birding trails for nature enthusiasts and birdwatchers. Guided by experienced naturalists, tourists could observe and identify a variety of bird species, including migratory birds, within the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary. These birding trails offered a unique wildlife experience, appealing to a niche segment of tourists passionate about birds and ecotourism.

e) Treks to Nearby Waterfalls: Aangan capitalized on the scenic beauty of the region by organizing treks to nearby waterfalls, namely 'Sawri' and 'Mainapi.' These treks allowed visitors to explore the lush landscapes, cascading waterfalls, and diverse flora and fauna of the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary. The adventurous and refreshing treks catered to nature enthusiasts, adventure seekers, and trekkers, expanding Aangan's appeal to a wider range of outdoor enthusiasts.

f) Cultural Immersion: Tourists were encouraged to participate in local food preparation, community festivals, and storytelling sessions. These informal interactions fostered mutual respect and helped in cultural preservation while making tourism more than just a transaction.

g) Catering to Diverse Visitor Segments: By introducing a variety of innovative activities, Aangan diversified its offerings and catered to diverse visitor segments. Families, nature lovers, adventure seekers, cultural enthusiasts, and educational tourists all found something unique and engaging in Aangan's array of experiences.

Table 4. 4: Diversified offerings to different segments at a glance

	Cultural	Nature Based	Agricultural	Adventure	Experiential
Families	Village tour	Birding trail	Strawberry farm	Waterfall trek	Cow milking
Ecotourists	Velip Rituals	Biodiversity walks	Strawberry farm	Waterfall trek	Birding sessions
Cultural travelers	Velip life				Local folklore; Local food, customs and traditions
Adventure seekers	Jungle trail			Waterfall trek	
Educational groups	Cultural talks	Medicinal plants	Sustainable Agriculture	Nature awareness	Eco practices

Source: Researcher's own

Natural Resource Utilization at Aangan

The success of the Aangan initiative was intrinsically tied to the judicious and respectful utilization of the natural resources that surrounded the village of Verlem. The community-led tourism project not only drew from the natural bounty of the region but also actively worked toward its preservation.

a) Proximity to the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary: One of the most valuable natural assets leveraged by Aangan was its geographical proximity to the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary. This region, recognized as part of the biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, served as both a conservation site and a draw for eco-conscious tourists. The sanctuary provided opportunities for low-impact nature-based tourism activities such as birdwatching, guided treks, and waterfall visits. Importantly, the tourism activities were carefully curated to avoid any disruption to wildlife or local ecosystems, with strict adherence to conservation ethics advised by associated environmentalists.



Fig 4.23: Left and Centre: Attractions at Netravali wildlife sanctuary; Right: “Budbude Taley” (Bubble Lake) another significant attraction at Netravali

Source: Mrugaya Xpeditions (23.7.2023)

b) Waterfalls and Forest Trails: The Sawri and Mainapi waterfalls, both located within accessible distance from Verlem, became major attractions in Aangan’s eco-tourism offering. These natural features not only provided scenic appeal but also supported experiential and adventure-based tourism. The treks to these locations, led by trained local guides, were designed with minimal environmental intrusion—relying on existing trails and avoiding the need for disruptive infrastructure. Tourists were educated on responsible practices during these visits, reinforcing the community’s commitment to sustainable resource use.

c) Agricultural Land and Forest Produce: Aangan also capitalized on traditional agricultural practices and access to forest produce to deliver meaningful and authentic

experiences to tourists. Strawberry cultivation and organic farming were integrated into the tourism narrative, offering visitors both educational and participatory roles in the village economy. At the same time, local herbs and forest products were sometimes showcased during nature walks and workshops, deepening tourists' understanding of the region's natural heritage. However, these interactions were guided to ensure that harvesting practices remained sustainable and aligned with Forest Department regulations.

d) Climatic and Geographic Suitability: Verlem's pleasant climate, abundant green cover, and scenic views made it an ideal location for hosting tourists seeking peace and natural beauty. The cottages, built using locally available materials, were designed to merge with the landscape, ensuring that the aesthetic of the area remained unaltered. Seasonal variations were acknowledged and planned for—tourist activities were adjusted based on accessibility and safety during monsoon months, thereby reflecting a careful synchronization with nature's rhythms.

e) Guided Use of Nature-Based Resources: Crucial to Aangan's approach was its reliance on expert guidance to ensure that natural resource utilization remained sustainable. Environmentalists and naturalists played a significant role in advising the community on issues ranging from waste management and eco-construction to visitor education and trail impact assessment. This guidance helped avoid the risk of overexploitation and ensured that tourism became a vehicle for conservation rather than a threat to it.

Sustainable Resource Management Practices

The sustainability of Aangan as a community-based tourism initiative was grounded not only in its low-impact approach but also in its conscious resource management strategies. These practices, interwoven with local traditions and external environmental guidance, ensured that the project did not compromise the ecological or socio-cultural fabric of Verlem village.

a) Low-Impact Infrastructure and Design: One of the most visible expressions of sustainability at Aangan was its architectural approach. The five cottages consciously upgraded an existing room inside their premise under the homestay model, using

locally sourced materials, maintaining a low height profile, and requiring minimal land disturbance. The decision to exclude attached bathrooms in favour of upgraded external washrooms reflected a conscious adaptation of local customs to tourism needs, minimizing water and plumbing interventions while respecting cultural norms.

b) Waste Management and Hygiene Practices: Given the location within an eco-sensitive zone, waste management emerged as a critical element of sustainable operations. Organic waste was often composted or used in local farming activities, while other forms of plastic waste were strictly not allowed with “carry your own plastic back” policy for tourists. These practices were accompanied by community-led monitoring to ensure compliance.

c) Controlled Visitor Flow and Seasonal Planning: To minimize pressure on natural and human resources, Aangan adopted a low-volume, high-value tourism model. Tourist arrivals were limited and staggered through pre-booking mechanisms, ensuring that no more than a manageable number of visitors were present at a time. Seasonal variations—particularly monsoons—were factored into operational plans, with certain outdoor activities either rescheduled or restricted to avoid disturbance in their regular agricultural activity or wildlife disturbance.

d) Conservation Education and Stakeholder Sensitization: Aangan’s sustainability approach extended beyond material practices into the realm of education and awareness. Both visitors and community members were engaged in sessions around biodiversity, local ecology, and conservation ethics, often led by environmentalists associated with the project. These sensitization efforts were instrumental in reinforcing pro-environmental behaviour among tourists and strengthening environmental stewardship among locals, particularly the youth and homestay families.

e) Revenue-Driven Sustainability Loops: Sustainable resource management at Aangan was also economic. The revenue-sharing model was intentionally structured to reward low-impact practices, such as guided eco-treks, birdwatching, and organic food preparation. By tying income to sustainable tourism activities, the initiative created positive feedback loops—community members were financially motivated to protect and manage the very resources on which their livelihoods depended.

Collaborative and Community Engagements

Aangan's development as a community-based tourism initiative was fundamentally anchored in collaborative partnerships and active community engagement. Unlike top-down tourism models, Aangan's strength lay in its ability to involve local actors—particularly the Velip tribal community—at every stage, from ideation and planning to implementation and monitoring. These collaborative engagements were both horizontal (among community members) and vertical (with external stakeholders), fostering a deeply rooted sense of ownership and sustainability.

a) **Formation of the Cooperative Society:** One of the earliest and most significant steps in institutionalizing community engagement was the creation of a cooperative society to manage tourism activities. This society served as a collective decision-making platform for the community, enabling democratic participation in resource allocation, scheduling of tourist visits, and distribution of income. The society became the legal and organizational backbone of Aangan, reflecting the village's collective will and protecting community interests.

b) **Participatory Planning with Local Stakeholders:** The design and execution of Aangan's tourism offerings were shaped through participatory rural appraisals (PRA) and stakeholder meetings, in which community members, particularly women and elders, were encouraged to express their aspirations and concerns. This inclusive approach ensured that the tourism model was not imposed but co-created. It also helped integrate culturally sensitive practices—such as restrictions on alcohol consumption, respect for religious rituals, and preservation of traditional architecture—into the tourism experience.

c) **Youth and Women's Involvement:** While the initial momentum came from a few visionary leaders, younger members of the community were involved in operational roles such as guiding treks, conducting village tours, and managing bookings. Women played an active role in homestay hospitality, food preparation, and cultural demonstrations. These engagements not only diversified income sources but also strengthened social inclusion, challenged traditional gender roles, and contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of marginalized groups within the village.

d) Collaboration with Environmental Experts: The success of Aangan was also built on strategic collaborations with environmentalists and NGO professionals. Experts like Parag Rangnekar and Shraddha Rangnekar offered ecological and tourism planning advice, trained community members in biodiversity interpretation, and helped establish environmentally sound tourism practices. These collaborations were not extractive but symbiotic, with external actors respecting local knowledge and adapting their frameworks to community contexts.

e) Partnerships with Government and Institutional Actors: Although bureaucratic constraints existed (discussed later), initial collaborations with bodies like the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG) facilitated access to funding and technical guidance. MSFG's grant served as both a financial boost and a recognition of the village's potential to lead its own development through tourism. Moreover, occasional cooperation from the Forest Department allowed limited access to buffer zones for nature-based activities, albeit under regulatory monitoring. Aangan also benefited from strategic collaborations with tourism enterprises like Mrugaya Expeditions, a Goa-based tour company that partners with travel agencies in Bangalore (Dharwadkar & Rangnekar, 2022). This collaboration has enabled Aangan to reach a wider audience through Mrugaya's promotional efforts on their website and social media, further enhancing Aangan's visibility and marketability.

f) Social Cohesion and Collective Identity: Aangan fostered a sense of social cohesion among the villagers by positioning tourism not as an individual economic pursuit but as a shared community vision. This approach helped minimize internal competition, prevent elite capture, and promote equitable benefit sharing. Over time, the initiative became a symbol of collective identity, where success was celebrated as a communal achievement, and challenges were addressed through shared responsibility.

g) Trust-Building and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms: The process of collaboration was not without friction—occasional disagreements arose over revenue distribution, or prioritization of homestays. However, these issues were addressed through village-level consultations, consensus-building exercises, and facilitation by neutral actors like environmentalists. The existing social capital of the Velip community—built on kinship, shared rituals, and collective memory—enabled constructive conflict resolution and long-term engagement.

Table 4. 5: Collaborative and Community Engagements at a glance

Aspect	Description
a) Formation of the Cooperative Society	A cooperative society was established to manage tourism activities. It ensured collective decision-making, democratic participation in resource use, tourist scheduling, and income distribution.
b) Participatory Planning with Local Stakeholders	Tourism design and execution involved participatory rural appraisals (PRA) and stakeholder meetings. Community members, especially women and elders, contributed their ideas, ensuring co-creation of the tourism model with cultural sensitivity and local appropriateness.
c) Youth and Women's Involvement	Youth engaged in operations such as trekking and tour guiding, while women took key roles in homestays, food preparation, and cultural activities.
d) Collaboration with Environmental Experts	Environmentalists like Parag and Shraddha Rangnekar provided ecological expertise, trained locals in biodiversity interpretation, and co-developed eco-friendly practices.
e) Partnerships with Government and Institutional Actors	Support from entities like the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG) enabled financial and technical assistance. Cooperation from the Forest Department occasionally allowed regulated nature-based activities in buffer zones. Partnerships with tourism enterprises like Mrugaya Expeditions assisted promotional activity.
f) Social Cohesion and Collective Identity	Tourism was positioned as a collective community goal rather than an individual pursuit. This approach minimized internal competition and fostered a shared identity and equitable benefit sharing.
g) Trust-Building and Conflict Resolution Mechanisms	Disagreements over matters like revenue sharing were addressed through village consultations and consensus-building, often facilitated by neutral actors.

Source: Researcher's own

Navigating Operational Realities in an Eco-Sensitive Environment

Operating a tourism venture in a highly sensitive environmental and socio-cultural ecosystem necessitated context-specific responses that went beyond standard ecotourism practices. The daily operational realities at Aangan were shaped by the delicate balance between promoting tourism for livelihood generation and preserving the integrity of the environment and local culture.

a) **Managing Human-Wildlife Interactions:** Due to the village's location near forest fringes, occasional human-wildlife encounters—such as wild boars entering farms or leopards spotted on trails—posed operational challenges. Aangan's response was to promote awareness among both tourists and residents through informal briefings on “dos and don'ts” in forest zones.

b) **Environmentally-Compatible Construction and Use of Resources:** The built environment of Aangan was consciously designed to minimize ecological disturbance. No extra constructions were made for the home-stay. Just an extra room in the

prevalent cottage was spruced up for the visitors with basic eco-friendly furniture. Washrooms were located externally to reduce water load within cottages, and rainwater harvesting mechanisms were considered to supplement seasonal water sources. Cooking methods involved traditional stoves and firewood.

c) Seasonal Variations and Operational Flexibility: The monsoon season in Goa (June to September) significantly affected tourist footfall, accessibility, and operational logistics. Aangan had to develop seasonal schedules—limiting outdoor activities like waterfall treks during the rains, and instead promoting indoor cultural immersion such as storytelling, food preparation, and farming-based demonstrations. Infrastructure maintenance was also intensified pre-monsoon to prevent erosion and water damage to cottages.

d) Waste Management Tourism: Given the fragile ecology of the Netravali region, Aangan followed a low-waste, minimal-impact tourism model. Tourists were instructed to carry their own plastic waste back. Wet waste was composted and used as manure.

e) Cultural Sensitivity as an Environmental Imperative: In a context where environment and culture are deeply intertwined, operational norms at Aangan also reflected cultural sensibilities that helped conserve ecological and social equilibrium. Prohibitions on alcohol, restrictions on loud music, and discouragement of disrespectful tourist behaviour were enforced not just to protect community norms but also to maintain a serene and environmentally respectful atmosphere.

f) Dependence on Limited Resources and Utilities: Verlem village's remote location and basic infrastructural access posed operational constraints—low internet penetration and limited transport connectivity were recurring challenges.

g) Regulatory Challenges and Adaptive Operational Strategies: Aangan's functioning faced significant regulatory hurdles. Activities such as treks and birding trails required conditional and often ad-hoc permissions from the Forest Department, with rules changing seasonally and being subject to discretionary enforcement. This necessitated continuous negotiation and adaptability in planning tourism offerings. A more fundamental challenge was the absence of established bylaws for community-participatory tourism projects when the initiative was first proposed. Parag Rangnekar

had to develop the legal framework from scratch—drafting bylaws and securing government permissions—before Aangan could be formally launched.

h) Operational Fragility in Perishable Produce Management: One of the key tourism-linked livelihood activities in Aangan was strawberry cultivation. Initially, villagers partnered with a vendor from a nearby city who would purchase packets of strawberries at ₹40 each, provided the supply remained consistent. However, the organic and fresh quality of the produce attracted tourists who were willing to pay double the amount—₹80 per packet—during their visits. Tempted by higher margins, villagers began diverting produce to tourists, resulting in irregular supply to the vendor. This inconsistency led to the discontinuation of the vendor partnership. Subsequently, during periods of low tourist inflow, villagers were left with excess harvests that could not be sold in time, leading to post-harvest losses. This experience highlighted a key operational challenge in managing perishables within a tourism-dependent framework.

Government Policies and External Pressures

Aangan's evolution as a community-based tourism initiative occurred within a multilayered policy environment shaped by national, state, and local governance frameworks. At the national level, the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, is responsible for formulating overarching policies and allocating funds for tourism development across states. These policies are implemented at the state level by institutions such as the Goa Tourism Board (GTB), the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), and the Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Government of Goa, which together coordinate and monitor tourism-related activities across the region (Gore, 2019; Gore et al., 2023).

While the central and state governments play an important role in infrastructure provisioning—such as roads, electricity, and water supply—the implementation of these facilities in remote or protected areas like Netravali is often subject to administrative delays and logistical constraints. In addition, state-level schemes such as the 'Atal Gram Yojana' offer benefits such as free seedlings and monthly financial assistance to youth under the backward class category. However, some stakeholders observed that such sustained financial support, while well-intentioned, may have inadvertently diminished entrepreneurial drive and reduced incentives for self-initiated

tourism ventures among the local population (P. Rangnekar, personal communication, September 13, 2021).

Aangan also faced operational challenges arising from policy and regulatory ambiguities. Being located within the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, the initiative required continuous engagement with the Forest Department to secure permissions for activities like treks and birding trails. The absence of a formal framework governing community-led tourism within protected areas resulted in inconsistent enforcement of rules, often dependent on the discretion of individual officials. This lack of policy clarity created procedural delays and uncertainty. In the absence of standardized bylaws or legal templates for such models, early proponents of Aangan, including Parag Rangnekar, had to draft the necessary legal provisions independently, increasing the administrative load on the project.

Additionally, tribal protection laws—while essential for preserving Velip cultural identity—occasionally posed interpretive challenges. In some instances, these were perceived as limiting opportunities for cultural exchange, a core value embedded in Aangan’s tourism philosophy. Although initial institutional support from entities like the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa provided essential seed funding, long-term institutional mechanisms for capacity building, innovation support, and policy integration remained limited. This constrained Aangan’s ability to scale or formalize its operations within a supportive policy ecosystem.

Seasonal Fluctuations in Tourism Demand

Aangan’s tourism model was deeply influenced by seasonal variations, with monsoon months (June to September) bringing a decline in visitor numbers due to heavy rains, poor road conditions, and limited outdoor activity options. This off-season lull affected income streams and required efforts to sustain community motivation. In contrast, the post-monsoon period (October to May) saw a surge in eco-tourists and educational groups, often stretching the limited human and infrastructural resources of the initiative. The community’s small size and reliance on a few active members occasionally led to operational fatigue during these peak months.

The COVID-19 pandemic and government free schemes to youth under the Atal Gram Yojana further disrupted Aangan's seasonal rhythm, halting activity. Its dependence on word-of-mouth promotion and niche clientele, in the absence of digital marketing or integration into mainstream tourism circuits, exacerbated the impact of these seasonal fluctuations on both visibility and sustainability.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Issues

Situated within the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, Aangan operated under strict forest reserve regulations, requiring multi-agency approvals for even small-scale infrastructure or programmatic changes. The lack of a clear policy framework for community-based tourism, especially tribal-led initiatives, further constrained its access to state schemes, visibility in tourism circuits, and capacity-building resources. Despite operating as a low-impact and culturally sensitive model, Aangan faced ambiguity in long-term regulatory support, which hindered growth and institutional recognition. The project's dependence on individual facilitators rather than structured institutional backing left it vulnerable to administrative shifts and leadership turnover. Moreover, potential policy changes—such as reclassification of the Velip tribe or shifts in forest department priorities—could abruptly alter or restrict tourism activities, threatening community autonomy and livelihood stability.

Post-Divine Phase: Challenges

Tangible Resource Constraints:

a) Internal Conflict and Community Cohesion: Over time, interpersonal conflicts and diminishing trust among community members began affecting day-to-day operations. Frictions emerged around the usage of cottages and the allocation of tasks, which led to disruptions in hospitality delivery.

b) Decline in Tourist Footfall: The Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted visitor numbers. With mobility restrictions and changing travel priorities, the steady flow of tourists halted, directly affecting income and operational continuity.

Financial Resource Challenges

a) Strain on Revenue-Sharing Mechanism During the COVID-19 Pandemic: The revenue-sharing model between the tourism initiative and community members came under considerable stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. With travel restrictions, health concerns, and a dramatic decline in tourist arrivals, the enterprise experienced a sharp reduction in income. This disruption had a cascading effect on the distribution of revenues among society members, many of whom relied on these earnings as a supplementary or primary source of livelihood.

Innovation Setbacks

a) Loss of Youth Participation and Decline in Creative Tourism Activity Development: Youth often bring fresh ideas, digital competencies, and a stronger connection to evolving market trends. In the case of Aangan, the early phase of tourism development had witnessed an encouraging involvement of local youth, particularly in areas such as creative experience design, social media promotion, and the integration of traditional cultural elements into tourism offerings. However, with government schemes offering livelihood support, local youth gradually turned away from tourism as a viable career path. The earlier spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship declined, and involvement in upkeep and management waned. This disengagement resulted in a stagnation of new product development, reduced innovation in storytelling and experiential activities, and a decline in the diversity and appeal of the tourism offerings. The absence of youth energy and input curtailed the initiative's ability to continuously evolve and remain attractive to changing tourist expectations, particularly in the post-COVID travel landscape.

b) COVID-19's Impact on Diversification and Rural Engagement: The pandemic significantly disrupted the momentum of diversification efforts within the tourism enterprise. Prior to COVID-19, Aangan had begun exploring multiple avenues to enrich its portfolio—such as expanding into agro-tourism, promoting milking of cows by tourists, educational visits by students, jungle and waterfall treks etc. These efforts not only aimed to enhance the tourist experience but also to broaden community participation, particularly engaging women, older residents, and marginalised groups in productive roles within the tourism value chain. However, lockdowns, health

protocols, and the overarching sense of economic and social uncertainty during COVID-19 created formidable barriers to these initiatives. Physical gatherings and collaborative activities had to be suspended. Moreover, local stakeholders, who were previously optimistic about tourism-led development, became more risk-averse and hesitant to invest their time or resources. This disruption led to a temporary disengagement of rural residents from the tourism project and slowed down the diversification process.

External Pressures and Policy-Linked Concerns

Forest Policy Constraints and Cultural Protectionism: The tourism enterprise exists within the jurisdiction of the Forest Department and is subject to evolving policies that govern both environmental protection and indigenous rights. One such potential policy shift involves the classification of the Velip tribe as an endangered or particularly vulnerable indigenous community. Should the state adopt a protectionist stance—emphasizing cultural preservation and minimizing external influences—this could lead to restrictions on tourism interactions or even a complete prohibition of community-based tourism activities. Such decisions, though potentially well-intentioned from a conservation perspective, could disrupt the socio-economic fabric of the community, which has increasingly become reliant on tourism-based livelihoods.

Case 3: Wildernest

Located in the Swapnagandha valley, amidst a thick expanse of forest tracts at 800 metres above sea level, overlooking the Vazra waterfalls and the full panoramic view of Goa, Wildernest falls in Chorla Ghats, at the intersection of three states viz: Maharashtra, Karnataka and Goa. Villages in the vicinity viz -Chorla (population - 1,122) and Kanakumbi (population -1701) from Karnataka; Viridi (population – 943) and Dodamarg (a taluka with 55 villages with population ranging from 60{lowest} to 4,096{highest}) from Maharashtra and Surla (population – 3,818), Charavne and Keri (population – 3,040) from Goa (State Census, 2011) benefit from the existence of Wildernest.

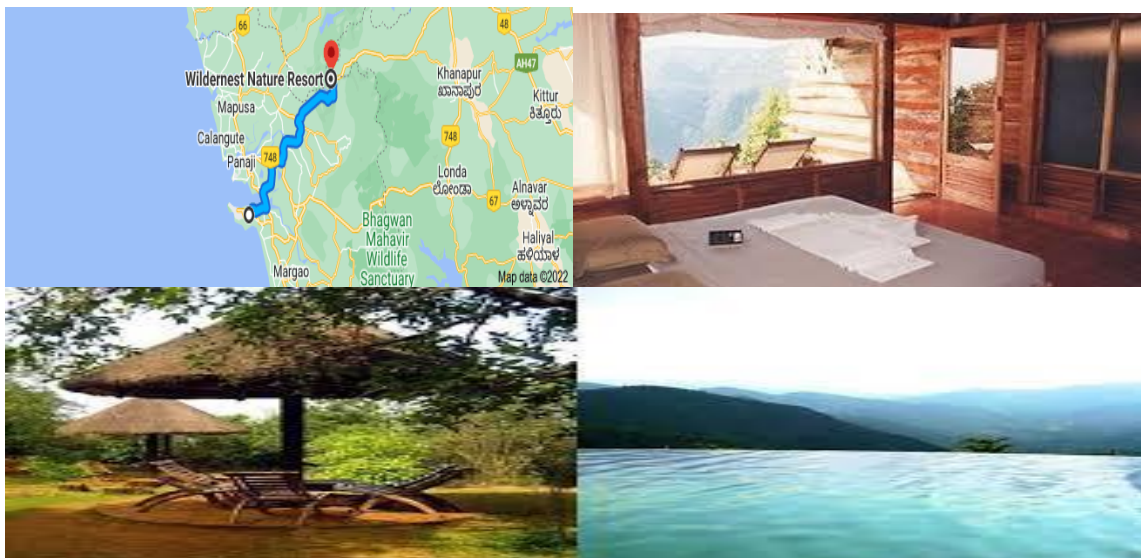


Fig 4.24: Top Left: Roadmap to Wildernest; Top Right: Cottage at Wildernest
Bottom Left: Entrance to Wildernest; Bottom Right: Infinity swimming pool

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goia.com/> (4.4.25)

The Wildernest Eco-Resort, nestled amidst the breathtaking beauty of the Chorla Ghats in the Western Ghats of India, stands as a shining example of sustainable ecotourism and conservation efforts. Operationalised in 2010 by Captain Nitin Dhond and a team of dedicated environmentalists, the resort's inception and subsequent growth have been driven by a profound commitment to safeguarding the region's rich biodiversity and uplifting the livelihoods of local communities.

Two main aims of Wildernest: The first was to protect 450 acres of Western Ghats Forest wedged between Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary of Maharashtra and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary of Karnataka. These 450 acres was a part of the 1000-acre property invested in by Captain. Second was providing a livelihood to the backward village communities around the area.

The Beginning

Captain Nitin Dhond and his family hailed from the village of Velgeum in Goa, a region that had once borne the brunt of unregulated mining activity. Recollections of widespread environmental degradation—including landslides and floods—remained etched in his memory, particularly an instance when his native village was nearly wiped out due to the impact of indiscriminate mining. In 1996, Captain Dhond initially set out with a simple intention: to purchase 15 acres of forest land near Chorla Ghats to build a farmhouse for his father. However, the ground realities he encountered led to a fundamental shift in his aspirations.

The forested area near Chorla called Swapnagandha, the area where Wildernest stands today, was ecologically significant and rich in mineral deposits such as bauxite, basalt, and laterites. It also served as an essential wildlife corridor between the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary in Goa and the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary in Karnataka. Rampant poaching, hunting, and tree felling were taking place in the area, threatening the fragile biodiversity. Much of the land belonged to small, economically marginalized village communities who were under constant pressure to sell or lease their property for mining-related activities. Several plots had already been deforested and earmarked for sampling by mining companies. The landscape and its people stood on the brink of irreversible change.

Moved by the ecological vulnerability and driven by a strong emotional connection to his roots, Captain Dhond made a pivotal decision to invest in the conservation of this area. What began as a personal project evolved into a large-scale conservation initiative. Instead of limiting himself to the initial plan of acquiring 15 acres, he embarked on the gradual and painstaking process of purchasing up to 1000 acres of fragmented forest land from local villagers. His aim was to create a private sanctuary that would protect the forest from commercial exploitation and revive its

ecological balance. This expansion in land acquisition was not initially part of a resort development plan but was primarily motivated by the need to protect the forest from further degradation. As Captain Dhond explained, although the initial project began with an estimated budget of ₹4 crores, the major portion of this investment—around ₹3 crores—was directed towards acquiring and protecting forest land rather than constructing resort infrastructure. The scale of deforestation already taking place in the area, including 70 acres of land that had been cleared by a mine-owner, emphasized the urgency of intervention.

During this phase, multiple alternatives for land use were considered. These included the possibility of plantation farming or the cultivation of forest products. However, each of these options was ultimately dismissed due to their potential to harm the native forest ecology which had medicinal herbs like Amruta, Narkiya, or Saptarangi; through deforestation or unsustainable harvesting. After deliberation, the team concluded that eco-tourism was the only viable model that could both sustain the investment and uphold the conservation objectives. It was seen as a compatible, revenue-generating activity that would not disrupt the forest ecosystem and could also serve as a platform for community engagement and ecological education.

This land acquisition, spanning over five years (1997–2002), involved extensive engagement with local communities. The process was far from straightforward. Many villagers expressed scepticism about the project, particularly its promises of alternative livelihoods. During one site visit, tensions escalated when workers were denied access to land and water by a group of disgruntled villagers. The atmosphere shifted significantly during a heated discussion when an elderly villager from Captain Dhond's own village shared a personal story. He recalled how, during a catastrophic flood caused by mining, it was Captain Dhond's cousin who had stayed behind to care for her cows and continued to provide milk to villagers, even as others evacuated. The elder, who had once worked in the mines, openly voiced his support for the Captain, stating:

"I have worked in the mines. I know the devastation that comes due to mining. Let us go with the captain, as his intentions look genuine."

This turning point catalysed greater community cooperation and trust. It also marked the beginning of a broader conservation effort that sought not just to protect the land, but to redefine the socio-economic possibilities for the villagers. While the majority of the forest was earmarked for ecological preservation, a small portion—approximately 15 acres (viz - just 1.5%) situated near the main tarred road—was identified as a site for a low-impact eco-tourism initiative. Recognizing the need for a sustainable economic model that could support both conservation and community livelihoods, Captain Dhond conceptualized an eco-resort that would blend harmoniously with the environment. This idea gave rise to Wilderndest, a tourism venture meant to serve as the financial engine of the conservation project.

Captain Dhond funded the land purchases almost entirely through his own earnings from sailing. Over the years, he continued to invest his salary into acquiring the fragmented land. His vision was supported by a close-knit team: Nirmal Kulkarni, a trained ecologist, led community awareness campaigns and conducted ecological restoration efforts in the villages and forests; Sudhir Naik handled strategic planning, operations, and project budgeting for Wilderndest.

The project was initiated in 2004, involving the construction of 3 mud and stone cottages. Unfortunately, these cottages were washed away during the initial rains. In response, the project was upgraded using locally sourced acacia wood (a material that is harmful to forests) and steel, resulting in the creation of 8 cottages. The concept of these eco-lodges was effectively promoted among the ecologists and environmentalists in Goa. During the first six months after completion, there was minimal occupancy. However, over time, the number of visitors steadily increased, and by the end of the year, occupancy rates improved. Notably, during the first monsoon season, full occupancy was achieved. Initially, visitor segmentation revealed that during the monsoon period, which spans from May to the 1st of October, 100% of the tourists were domestic, while from October to May, 60% were foreign tourists. This positive reception and demand prompted Wilderndest to expand its operations.

The overarching strategy was multifold—conservation of biodiversity, prevention of deforestation and poaching, and generation of sustainable livelihoods. Villagers were gradually weaned off from practices such as illegal hunting and sale of land for mining, and were instead engaged in activities related to forest restoration and

eco-tourism services. Environmental education was also imparted to reinforce long-term stewardship. In 2010, Wildernest responded to the encouraging trend of tourist visitation and launched a total of 26 cottages, categorized as 'Forest View' (located at higher elevations within the forests) and 'Valley View' (situated at lower levels). This expansion marked the commencement of full-fledged commercial operations under the name Wildernest Pvt. Limited, with an initial investment of ₹50 lacs.

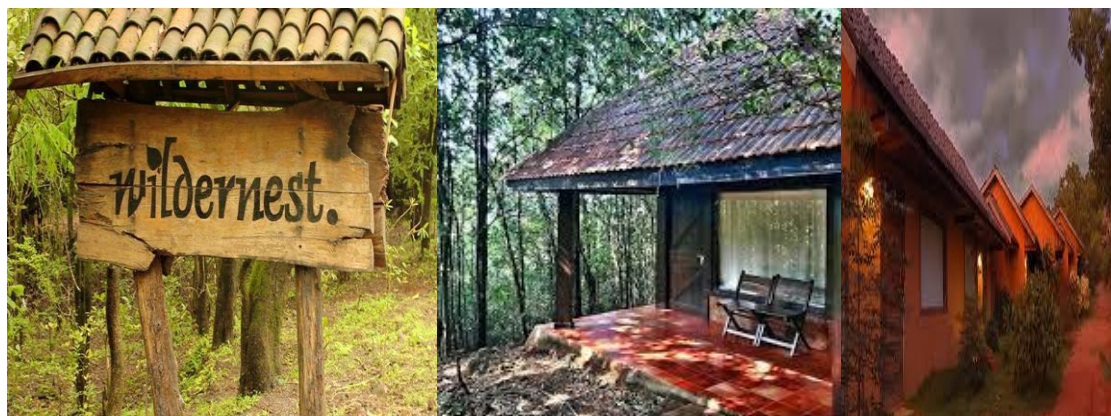


Fig 4 25: Left: Wildernest's signboard; Centre: Forest view cottage, Right: Valley view cottages

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

Operations & Offerings - The ecotel, spanning over 2% of the forest area, plays a vital role in the local community by providing employment opportunities to 50 villagers from neighbouring villages. It contributes to the economic growth of the region and actively promotes and preserves local culture.

Their offerings include a trek to the Highest Point, screening of a Wildlife Film, a Village Tour, a trek to the Waterfall, a Ropeway Carriage trip across the forest, Local Cuisine served at the in-house restaurant, relaxation at the Infinity swimming pool, Ayurvedic Massage at Ayurshala, Mehndi Art and Local Attire, Bonfires at the Bonfire Point, Folk Dances, Botanical Tours, Birding trail and Night trail.

Screening of Wildlife Film is done to sensitize tourists to the flora and fauna of Swapnagandha. The ropeway carriage which is a recent addition at Wildernest is a major attraction for tourists as they get to see the breath-taking panoramic view between the two resorts of Wildernest (forest view cottages) and Swapnagandha (valley view cottages). Local cuisine served by the villagers is authentic and wholesome (no restriction on the servings) and includes both vegetarian and non-

vegetarian dishes. Most of the resources viz; vegetables and meat are sourced from the nearby areas and so are fresh and healthy. The pond shaped infinity pool overlooking the lush green mountains, with local lime inner coating and non-chlorinated fresh water supply is another major attraction where tourists swim, relax and feel rejuvenated. On demand of a few discerning guests a single cottage (premium price) has also been provided with an individual infinity pool.



Fig 4.26: Top: Pictures of the restaurant
Bottom Left: Common Infinity swimming pool. Bottom Right: Single cottage (premium price) provided with an individual infinity pool.

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

The Ayurshala at Wildernest Nature Resort is a unique effort to revitalize the dying traditions of local knowledge of medicinal plants in the Goan Western Ghats and is based on the principles of Ayurveda in its purest form as envisaged by the local communities. The massage therapies followed here delves into the true sense of local

knowledge by using derivatives of medicinal plants, herbs and roots (also called as non-timber forest products -NTFPs, collected from the surrounding forests) coupled with natural elements like buttermilk, water, and natural gel. Manned by local staff, this enterprise is a sincere effort to provide guests with a different experience amidst natural settings at Wildernest.

Mehndi Art and Local Attire, Bonfires at the Bonfire Point, Folk Dances are all included in the price of the package and offered to guests.



Fig 4.27: Left to Right: Mehendi art, Local attire, Bonfire point, Folk dance
Source: <https://www.wildernest-goia.com/> (4.4.25)

Sightings of the following species (some rare) are available in this part of the western ghats which is their unique selling proposition (USP) viz - Sloth Bear, Indian Gaur, Barking Deer, Sambhar, Common Leopard, Indian Tiger, Rudy Mongoose, Palm Civet, Small Indian Civet, Wild Dog, Jungle cat, Mouse deer, Wild Boar, Indian hare, Giant squirrel, Flying Squirrel, Black faced Langur, Indian Pangolin, Slender Loris, Bonnet macaque etc. These sightings and more are attempted during the Botanical Tours, Birding trail and Night trail.





Fig 4.28: Animals and birds spotted during the trails
Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

The presence of an infinity swimming pool, ropeway carriage, Ayurshala, jungle treks, waterfall walks, and a well-stocked bar – all cater to the needs of tourists from various segments, i.e., the nature lovers or trekkers.



Fig 4.29: Top left and centre: Ropeway carriage; Top right: Jungle trek
Bottom Left: Waterfall walk; Bottom Right: Well stocked bar
Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

People involved in the project: Capt. Nitin Dhond (Managing Director) along with his father Panduranga Narahari Dhond (affectionately known as Baba Dhond) are the pioneers of Wildernest. Nirmal Kulkarni (Director - Ecology) and Rahul Khanolkar, both environmentalists, ably provide technical knowhow about the wilderness and its protection. Sudhir Naik (Director - Finance), an MBA in finance, leads strategic planning initiatives, expansion plans, and development of significant operating and project budgets for Wildernest. Sameer (Manager - Electrical) takes care of all electrical activity and repair works of pumps etc. at the site.



Fig 4.30: From Left to Right: Capt. Nitin Dhond, Nirmal Kulkarni, Rahul Khanolkar, Sudhir Naik

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

Growth

Social entrepreneur Capt. Nitin Dhond, with his dedicated team of environmentalists, have used their in-depth knowledge of the forest and local cultures & traditions to very sensitively design a project that leads to the inclusive, sustainable growth of the local communities.

Captain Dhond has founded the 'Mhadei Research Centre' having reputed environmentalists on board who study and monitor the plant and animal species in the area. According to Captain Nitin Dhond, *"We have found an increase in wildlife. The near extinct species like 'Slender loris', 'Giant Squirrels' have started colonising again due to our efforts"*



Fig 4.31: Dedicated conservation activity at Mhadei Research Centre
Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

The project's accommodations, designed with sensitivity to the surrounding nature, feature large wooden cottages with glass windows offering breathtaking views of the abundant landscapes. Environmentally conscious amenities include bathrooms equipped with hot water facilities and natural herbal powders for hair, face, and body washes, as well as a freshwater infinity swimming pool and a ropeway carriage. The use of low-wattage lights along pathways and in the rooms ensures minimal disruption to the local animal life. To maintain a tranquil environment, loud music is not permitted at night, and waste management programs are implemented for sustainability. To reduce the impact of outside vehicles on the premises, Wildernest strictly adheres to a 'no entry to outside vehicles' policy. All vehicles must be parked at the entry point, and guests are transported to the cottages via resort vehicles. The team's commitment to respecting the carrying capacity limits of the location demonstrates their dedication to preserving the natural beauty of the area.



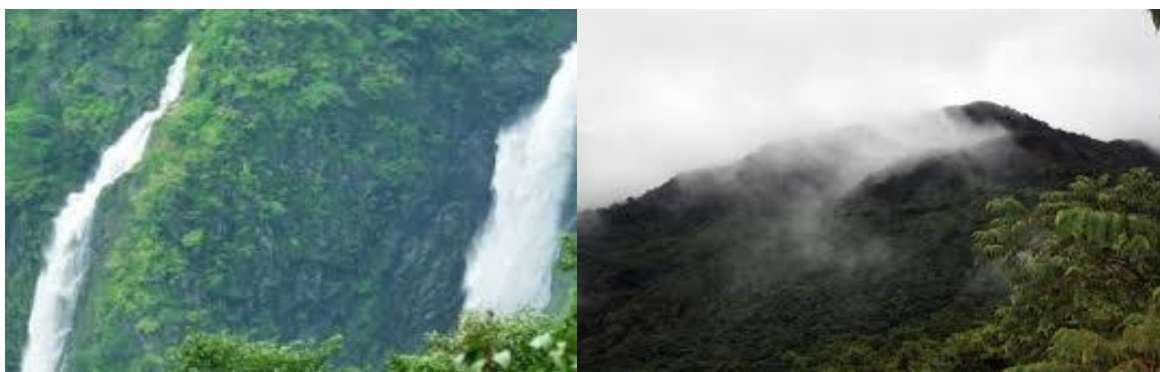


Fig 4.32: Top Left: Resort vehicle for visitors from entry point; Top Centre & Right: Rooms with large windows; Bottom Left & Right: Panoramic view of the landscape visible from the room's window.

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

Local communities benefit significantly from the project as perishable and non-perishable food items are sourced from nearby villages. Tourists have the opportunity to engage in village walks, interact with villagers, witness folk song and dance presentations, experience rural lifestyles, and even participate in rural agriculture, providing economic advantages to the locals while preserving their culture. Wildernest actively supports the local community by promoting and selling handicrafts, canework, and food items made by village women at their resort counter.



Fig 4.33: Left: Village Walk; Right: Exposure to pottery at the village

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (4.4.25)

Wildernest uses acacia wood (which is harmful to all trees and plantation) from their forests for repair and maintenance (continuous ongoing maintenance) of their wooden furniture. Acacia trees destroy the forest; hence, the usage of these trees for construction activity is known as social forestry, by the forest department (Capt. Nitin Dhond, personal communication, Feb 2, 2021). The project's environmental

sustainability is further strengthened through collaborations with strong NGO groups of environmentalists. These partnerships contribute to attracting the right target segment of serious nature lovers to the resort. To market their products effectively, Wilderdest utilizes information and communication technology (ICT) on their website and relies on word of mouth (WOM) publicity to foster repeat clientele, thereby building a niche customer base.

Over the past 11 plus years of operation, Wilderdest has not only achieved its initial goals but has also set new standards in eco-tourism within Goa and the Western Ghats of India. Renowned as a role model for sustainable tourism, the project now focuses on combining conservation education with travel and relaxation.

Table 4.6: Financial Figures of Wilderdest from 2011 to 2020 –

Wilderdest										
	Figures	For	The	Year	Ending					
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Investment	50,00,000	55,00,000	60,50,000	66,55,000	73,20,500	2,68,12,500	4,55,62,500.00	4,55,62,500.00	4,55,62,500.00	4,55,62,500.00
No. of Cottages	26	26	26	30	30	37	37	37	37	37
Max Possible Occupancy(days/year) for ----- cottages	0.52	0.56	0.58	0.62	0.64	0.67	0.68	0.70	0.72	0.74
Total days of booking/year for ----- cottages	190	204	218	226	234	236	240	245	250	253
Total Revenue (Rs)	1,77,87,477	1,83,25,709	2,76,35,967	2,93,59,056	3,04,68,281	2,91,95,103	3,82,23,093	3,38,14,934	3,97,19,786	4,15,95,341
Total Expenditure	1,98,02,330	2,35,17,259	3,34,67,222	3,38,05,159	2,58,38,149	2,80,87,595	3,88,94,158	3,59,34,356	3,92,31,416.25	4,36,38,528
Profit Before Tax	-20,14,853	-51,91,550	-58,28,608	-44,46,103	46,30,132	29,46,380	-1,79,901	3,62,129	4,88,370	-20,43,188
Total Local Staff	40	44	48	50	64	60	58	57	55	50
Remuneration to Local Staff – Contribution to local economy	10,00,000	13,00,000	16,90,000	21,97,000	28,56,100	21,27,346	22,74,731	27,71,597	3,06,87,083	41,50,470

Source: Accounts Department – Wilderdest1(2.11.2021)

Table 4.6 presents the financial figures of Wilderdest from 2011 to 2020, showcasing its growth and financial performance during this period. The project began in 2010-11 with an initial investment of ₹50,00,000 and has steadily increased its investment by approximately ₹5 to ₹5.5 lakhs per annum up to 2015. The years 2016 and 2017 witnessed a surge in investment, attributed to the increase in the number of cottages from thirty to thirty-seven. The total days of booking for each cottage have been consistently increasing, starting from 190 days in 2010-11 (i.e. 52% which is $190/365 \times 100$) to 253 days in 2020. Even during the pandemic, the resort remained

operational, as visitors found solace and security in the secluded and natural surroundings provided by Wildernest.

A reduction in expenditure from ₹3.38 crores in 2013-14 to ₹2.58 crores in 2014-15 is noticed, despite ongoing increases in staff remuneration and occupancy rates. As the number of guests increased, there was a corresponding reduction in expenses related to advertising and commissions for tour operators. Furthermore, once a certain point of occupancy and efficiency was reached, the expenses related to the upkeep of the place began to decrease. This trend is evident in the curvy-linear graph of expenses, which dipped after 2013-14 while the revenue graph continued to grow linearly.

Wildernest broke even in 2014-15, indicating that revenues matched expenses, and the business started generating profits. Since then, the venture has steadily progressed, marking consistent growth in revenue and pursuing its commitment to promoting sustainable practices, supporting local communities, and preserving the natural environment.

Resources at Wildernest

Tangible Resources

Physical Assets

Wildernest is situated in the Chorla Ghats region of the Western Ghats and features built infrastructure that integrates local building materials and topography to preserve the natural aesthetics of the landscape.

a) Cottages: The resort comprises wooden cottages constructed using regionally sourced timber (acacia wood from their forests; presence of which is harmful to other trees) and other natural materials. These structures are equipped with glass-panelled facades that provide panoramic views of the surrounding forests and valleys. Spread across two sites—Wildernest (forest-facing) and Swapnagandha (valley-facing)—the cottages are designed to blend with the terrain, minimizing disruption to the local ecosystem. A ropeway system connects the higher-elevation cottages of Wildernest

to the lower-lying Swapnagandha units, allowing guests to view the beautiful landscape.

b) Infinity Pool: A signature feature of the resort is its chlorine-free infinity pool located along a mountain ledge. This pool is treated with lime-based alternatives to standard chemical treatments, aligning with the resort's emphasis on sustainability. The pool overlooks the valley and serves as a focal point for guests seeking both leisure and landscape immersion.

c) Ayurshala Wellness Facility: The Ayurshala is a wellness and treatment space introduced within the property, offering traditional health therapies based on indigenous knowledge and medicinal herbs. The facility was designed as an additional service offering, integrating elements of local healing practices into the visitor experience.

d) Nature Trails and Viewing Decks: Wildernest has developed marked nature trails across its premises, enabling guided treks and wildlife walks without causing soil erosion or habitat disruption. Strategically positioned viewing decks allow guests to observe the region's flora and fauna, including rare sightings like the Slender Loris and the Giant Squirrel, without venturing into ecologically sensitive zones.

e) Mhadei Research Centre: Located within the premises, the Mhadei Research Centre functions as an ecological observatory and educational hub. It facilitates biodiversity monitoring and nature interpretation activities, and serves as a resource for internal staff training as well as external collaborations with ecologists and

students.



Fig 4.34: A centuries-old Shiva Linga discovered by the research team during ecological fieldwork in the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary.

Source: <https://www.wildernest-goa.com/> (5.4.25)

Financial Resources

Wilderness's financial trajectory has involved multiple phases of investment and reinvestment aimed at infrastructure development, operational enhancement, and conservation-linked initiatives.

a) Initial Investment: The resort began with an investment of ₹50 lakhs in 2010–11, used for basic infrastructure development and the establishment of the initial set of cottages. This investment was sourced by the founding team through internal funding and private contributions.

b) Expansion and Reinvestment: Over the years, capital was reinvested in a phased manner to support additions such as Swapnagandha cottages, the Ayurshala, and the Mhadei Research Centre. By 2017, the cumulative investment had reached approximately ₹4.55 crores. The financial planning emphasized gradual scaling, with each phase aligned to operational needs and environmental constraints.

c) Revenue Generation: Wilderness generates revenue through guest accommodations, curated nature experiences, wellness services, and seasonal events. Additional income is derived from the in-house sale of local artisanal goods, processed food items like pickles and masalas, and nature-based merchandise. These initiatives not only diversify income but also support local producers and community vendors.

Intangible Resources

Human Capital

Wilderness's operational backbone is shaped by a team of individuals with diverse expertise across tourism, ecology, hospitality, and community engagement.

a) Founders' Background and Vision: The founding members of Wilderness include individuals with varied experience in ecotourism, wildlife conservation, and rural development. This multidisciplinary leadership shaped the foundational vision of the resort — to offer a tourism experience rooted in conservation and local participation. Their prior engagements with nature-based projects and understanding of

environmental sensitivities contributed to the planning and execution of Wildernest's unique model.

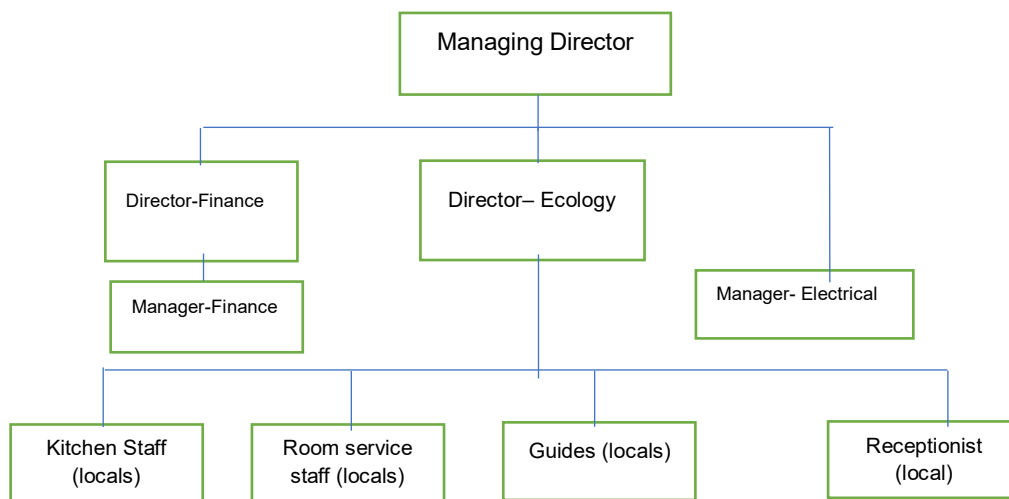


Fig 4.35: Wildernest's Organizational Structure
Source: Researcher's own contribution

b) Local Workforce Integration: Wildernest employs a workforce predominantly sourced from the surrounding villages of Goa, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Training programs were instituted in-house to develop skills in hospitality, guiding, housekeeping, and basic nature interpretation. Over time, many local employees moved into supervisory and managerial roles, bringing contextual knowledge and fostering a participatory work culture. The language fluency and cultural familiarity of the team contribute to a more grounded guest interaction experience.

c) Specialist Partnerships: To strengthen knowledge-based services, Wildernest established collaborations with naturalists, ecologists, and Ayurveda practitioners. These experts were brought in for specific roles such as biodiversity mapping, wellness programming, and ecological monitoring. The presence of such professionals supported both staff capacity-building and guest education initiatives.

Organizational Knowledge

Over the years, Wildernest has developed a set of internal systems, standard practices, and knowledge assets that support its daily functioning and long-term adaptability.

a) Eco-Conscious Operational Protocols: Internal guidelines have been developed for waste segregation, minimal plastic usage, and energy conservation. These protocols are not only part of daily operations but are also communicated to guests through signage and orientation briefings. This internalisation of sustainable practices forms an operational knowledge base that is consistently applied across departments.

b) Documentation and Interpretation: The Mhadei Research Centre contributes to the accumulation and documentation of ecological knowledge from the region. Wildlife sightings, plant biodiversity, and water quality observations are systematically recorded, creating a longitudinal dataset used both for academic partnerships and internal education. Additionally, curated nature interpretation material has been developed for guests and school groups.

c) Experience Design: The resort has developed a curated set of visitor experiences including dawn walks, sunset trails, cultural evenings, and storytelling sessions. These experiences are delivered based on seasonal rhythms and local calendar events. The design and scheduling of these experiences have evolved over time through feedback and ecological observation, forming a non-tangible but structured part of the guest experience.

Reputation and Brand Identity

Wilderness has cultivated a distinct brand identity that appeals to niche eco-travellers, researchers, and culturally curious tourists.

a) Positioning as a Conservation-Led Destination: The resort's positioning is built around its reputation as an environmentally responsible property that operates in harmony with nature. This reputation has been gradually built through word-of-mouth, curated travel reviews, and selective participation in eco-tourism networks rather than mass media promotions.

b) Return Visitors and Referrals: A significant share of bookings comes from return visitors and guest referrals. The loyalty stems from the personalized experience, consistent service quality, and the unique combination of wilderness immersion and

comfort. This visitor goodwill functions as a non-contractual yet impactful intangible asset.

c) Community Perception: Locally, Wildernest is perceived as a stable employment provider and a promoter of regional culture. This has helped the resort maintain social legitimacy and cooperative relationships with the neighbouring communities, facilitating smoother operations even during times of regional tourism fluctuations.

Natural Resource Utilization at Wildernest

Wildernest is located in the Chorla Ghats, a region within the Western Ghats recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot. The natural landscape is a defining feature of the resort, and multiple aspects of its operations have been structured to utilize, conserve, and integrate with these resources.

a) Forest Ecosystem and Biodiversity: The forested environment surrounding Wildernest includes semi-evergreen and deciduous forest types, which are home to several endemic and threatened species. The resort uses this setting not as an extractive asset but as a backdrop for nature interpretation and soft tourism. Daily guided treks, wildlife spotting, and birdwatching activities are structured around the existing flora and fauna, minimizing disturbance through designated trails and observation points.

b) Landscape Integration in Architecture: The built structures at Wildernest are designed around existing topography and tree lines. No land flattening or large-scale deforestation was undertaken during construction. Cottages are built using laterite stone and locally available acacia wood, and elevated where necessary to reduce ground impact. This minimizes habitat fragmentation and soil erosion, allowing the resort to coexist within the natural ecosystem rather than replace it.

c) Use of Indigenous Plant Species: Landscaping within the resort avoids ornamental or exotic species. Instead, native species were planted or preserved to maintain continuity with the surrounding forest. This enhances ecological resilience and reduces the need for external inputs like fertilizers or extensive irrigation.

d) **Minimal Energy Use:** Energy utilization at Wildernest is minimal and strategically designed to align with natural rhythms. Artificial lighting is subdued and restricted to essential pathways, reducing light pollution and preserving the nocturnal environment for wildlife and stargazing.

Strategic Initiatives and Innovations at Wildernest

Wildernest's operational philosophy integrates conservation goals with tourism, achieved through a series of deliberate strategic initiatives and innovations. These initiatives are rooted in ecological sensitivity, community involvement, and a non-mainstream approach to hospitality.

a) **No-Compromise Conservation Approach:** From its inception, Wildernest adopted a policy of minimal ecological interference. This included decisions such as not installing air conditioners or televisions in rooms, encouraging guests to disconnect from urban comforts and engage with the environment. The absence of conventional entertainment infrastructure was a conscious departure from typical resort models, aiming to attract a niche segment of nature-conscious travellers.

b) **The 'Eco-Tel' Concept:** Wildernest introduced the idea of an "Eco-Tel" — a term to describe an ecologically sustainable hotel model. This concept goes beyond eco-certifications, embedding sustainability into the foundational design, construction, and operations. It combines architectural practices that blend into the landscape with a hospitality model that emphasizes experiential and low-impact tourism.

c) **Research and Monitoring-Based Decision Making:** Before opening to tourists, the Wildernest team commissioned a six-month-long ecological study of the Chorla Ghats region. This study informed zoning decisions within the property, ensuring that built structures did not encroach upon ecologically sensitive zones. It also provided the basis for guided trail development, wildlife documentation, and interpretive materials used for guest education.

d) **Community-Sourced Operational Model:** Wildernest was designed to operate without bringing in outside professionals or hospitality staff. Instead, residents from surrounding villages were trained in all aspects of resort functioning — from cooking

and housekeeping to nature guiding and guest relations. This model not only minimized external influence but also helped embed local cultural ethos into the guest experience.

e) Establishment of the Mhadei Research Station: As part of its commitment to long-term ecological stewardship, Wildernest facilitated the establishment of the Mhadei Research Station — a conservation initiative focused on documenting and studying biodiversity in the Western Ghats. This collaboration with researchers, naturalists, and environmental organizations allows the property to contribute to regional conservation goals beyond its tourism operations.

f) Marketing Through Alternative Narratives: Wildernest consciously avoided mainstream advertising. Its early promotional efforts relied on word-of-mouth, documentary features, and networks of eco-tourism and nature lovers. Over time, this strategy helped the resort cultivate a loyal clientele base that valued its alternative approach, rather than attempting to cater to mass-market tourist expectations.

g) Climate Change and Environmental Degradation: In response to global environmental concerns, Wildernest has undertaken initiatives to monitor and reduce its ecological impact. Notably, the resort has secured a certification for carbon credits—an uncommon move among small-scale tourism enterprises—reflecting its commitment to long-term environmental accountability.

Table 4. 7: Summary of the strategic initiatives and innovations at Wildernest

Sr.No	Strategic Initiative	Description
a)	No-Compromise Conservation Approach	Avoided A/Cs and TVs; encouraged guest immersion in nature by eliminating conventional urban comforts and entertainment.
b)	The 'Eco-Tel' Concept	Pioneered a sustainable hotel model that blends architectural design with low-impact operations rooted in ecological principles.
c)	Research and Monitoring-Based Decisions	Conducted a 6-month ecological study before operations; used findings to guide construction zoning and eco-trail development.
d)	Community-Sourced Operational Model	Trained local villagers for all roles, fostering community involvement and reducing external staffing dependency.
e)	Mhadei Research Station Establishment	Supported a biodiversity documentation hub, reinforcing the resort's conservation ethos and aiding regional ecological research.

Sr.No	Strategic Initiative	Description
f)	Marketing Through Alternative Narratives	Relied on word-of-mouth, documentaries, and eco-networks instead of mainstream advertising to reach a niche eco-conscious audience.
g)	Climate Action and Carbon Credit Certification	Secured carbon credit certification to demonstrate commitment to reducing ecological footprint and environmental accountability.

Source: Researcher's own

Sustainable Resource Management Practices at Wilderdest

Wilderdest's operational ethos is deeply rooted in sustainable resource management, evident in its day-to-day practices as well as its long-term planning. The resort's remote location in the Western Ghats necessitated the development of self-sustaining systems that would minimize external dependencies and ecological impact.

a) Water Management: The resort sources water from natural mountain springs located within its premises. Rainwater harvesting structures have also been integrated into the resort's design to supplement water availability during the drier months.

b) Use of Renewable Energy Sources and environment awareness action: Although the resort is connected to the conventional power grid, energy consumption is kept minimal through deliberate infrastructure choices. Low wattage lighting and natural ventilation reduce reliance on artificial cooling and lighting. Restricting vehicular access, and adhering to a 'no loud music at night' policy, showcase its unwavering commitment to minimizing its environmental impact.

c) Eco-sensitive Construction Materials: All built structures, including cottages, sunset point sit-outs, and the dining area, were constructed using locally sourced materials such as laterite stone, acacia wood, steel mesh and thatch. These materials were chosen not only for their low environmental footprint but also for their ability to harmonize with the natural landscape. Steel mesh was used to keep mosquitoes and other insects at bay. Construction was carried out manually, without the use of heavy machinery, to prevent habitat disruption.

d) Sourcing of Ingredients and Supplies: Food supplies for the in-house restaurant are sourced primarily from local markets and nearby villages, with a strong emphasis on seasonal and organic produce. Perishables are procured in small quantities to avoid

wastage, and menu planning is done to align with available resources. Wildernest also maintains a small kitchen garden and herb patch to grow select vegetables and medicinal plants used in traditional Goan recipes.

e) Forest Restoration and Green Cover Maintenance: The promoters undertook reforestation initiatives across degraded portions of the property by planting native tree species. These efforts were based on the findings of the initial biodiversity study and were aimed at enhancing ecological integrity. The staff continue to monitor the growth of these plantations and prevent invasive species from spreading within the property.

Collaborative and Community Engagements at Wildernest

Wildernest has actively fostered collaborations with local communities, experts, and regional institutions, recognizing that sustained engagement with the socio-cultural and ecological fabric of the region is essential for the long-term viability of its tourism model. These collaborations span employment generation, cultural preservation, biodiversity conservation, and knowledge exchange.

a) Local Employment and Skill Development: From its inception, Wildernest prioritized the employment of individuals from surrounding villages such as Chorla, Kanakumbi, Viridi, Dodamarg, Surla, Charavane and Keri. A significant portion of its operational staff—including housekeeping, kitchen, gardening, and maintenance personnel—are from these local communities. New recruits undergo on-the-job training to develop hospitality-related skills, enhancing their employability and income security without requiring migration to urban areas.

b) Cultural Preservation through Performative Arts and Cuisine: The resort integrates local traditions into its guest experiences. Folk music performances by village troupes, presentations of regional dances, and storytelling sessions are regularly organized. These activities provide an income source for artists and help sustain traditional knowledge systems. Similarly, the in-house restaurant features Goan and regional Maharashtrian cuisine, with recipes contributed by community elders and adapted to seasonal availability.



Fig 4.36: Left: Regional Culture preservation; Right: Display of regional cuisine
Source: <https://www.wildernest-goia.com/> (4.4.25)

c) Local Procurement and Support to Village Economy: Wherever possible, procurement is done from local vendors and artisans. Items such as handicrafts, herbal products, and snacks are either purchased from local producers or retailed through the resort's small souvenir section. This creates market linkages for rural producers and enhances the economic multiplier effect of tourism revenue within the local area.

d) Partnerships with Researchers and NGOs: Wildernest has collaborated with environmental researchers, botanists, and NGOs working in biodiversity conservation and sustainable tourism. These partnerships have contributed to biodiversity documentation, environmental impact assessments, and training sessions for staff on sustainability practices. Some of these collaborations have also resulted in published biodiversity studies that include endemic and threatened species found within the property.

e) Integration with Forest Department and Eco-tourism Networks: Although the resort is privately managed, it operates in ecological proximity to state forest lands and maintains coordination with the Goa Forest Department. The management team has contributed inputs to ecotourism planning at the regional level and participated in dialogues on sustainable tourism policy. Wildernest has also been part of informal networks of eco-resorts in the Western Ghats, sharing best practices and engaging in regional workshops.

f) Facilitation of Community-based Conservation Awareness: The resort organizes nature trails and biodiversity awareness sessions not only for guests but also for students and community groups. These efforts aim to build ecological literacy in the region and instil a sense of custodianship toward the local environment. Such

programs are often delivered in the local language and facilitated by trained naturalists from the region.

Navigating Operational Realities in an Eco-Sensitive Environment

Operating a tourism venture within an ecologically sensitive zone like the Chorla Ghats entails unique challenges. Wilderrest, envisioned as an eco-conscious hospitality unit, encountered multiple operational constraints and regulatory requirements during its establishment and expansion phases.

a) Financial Institution Challenges and Compliance with Tourism Norms: In its formative stage, Wilderrest faced difficulty in securing financial assistance from conventional banking institutions. Despite the project's conservation-oriented philosophy, the resort did not meet the prevailing benchmarks that defined tourism ventures eligible for certain government schemes or subsidies. Specifically, incentives and grants were aligned with star-category resort norms, which mandated visible promotional elements such as hoardings near amenities like the swimming pool, or at least 10% of rooms having air-conditioners installed in them. These conditions were not aligned with the intended design and natural aesthetic of the property. The promoters encountered a lack of institutional support, with banks hesitant to fund a forest-based project lacking conventional collateral. One bank even stated that assistance would have been easier had the resort been located on a beach rather than in a forest, highlighting a systemic gap in support for conservation-driven tourism. During the site inspection process, a government-appointed auditor evaluated the facility for its eligibility as an eco-tourism venture. While standard protocols suggested the need for certain modifications to match rating parameters, the auditor reviewed the underlying principles and physical layout of the resort. Based on the actual practices and infrastructural design observed during the visit, the facility was accorded ecotel status without further alterations.

Despite initial reluctance from banking institutions and ineligibility for conventional subsidies, the resort opted for a self-funded model. Over time, this led to financial independence and Wilderrest now operates as a zero-debt enterprise (Capt. Nitin Dhond, personal conversation, Feb 8, 2021)

b) Structural Challenges in Pool Construction and Eco-Friendly Design Solutions: The construction of a large-scale infinity swimming pool presented an additional operational challenge. The topography and terrain made it difficult to accommodate such a structure without disrupting the natural landscape. Technical feasibility was achieved through collaboration with a civil engineering professional from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), who advised on structural design, water pressure calculations, and material stability, enabling the pool to be integrated into the existing contours.

To adhere to environmentally responsible construction practices, the interior of the pool was coated using natural lime that did not cause irritation to the skin or release chemical residues into the water. Additionally, the resort chose not to utilize chlorine or other chemical agents for water purification. Instead, alternative green filtration methods were adopted to maintain water quality, aligning the infrastructure with the resort's broader sustainability orientation.

c) Local Workforce Challenges: As Wildernest expanded its operations, increasing its capacity from 30 to 37 cottages, it encountered a challenge related to workforce retention. The resort's investment in training employees in eco-tourism principles enhanced their professional capabilities, making them attractive to larger hospitality establishments. Consequently, several trained personnel transitioned to higher-paying positions in five-star and seven-star resorts. This trend contributed to a reduction in staff numbers, from 64 in 2015 to 50 by 2020.

While the option to recruit externally existed, it presented certain limitations. Wildernest's operational model prioritised the employment of local residents as part of its community-centric approach. Hiring individuals from outside the region risked altering this model and potentially affecting the cultural continuity of guest interactions, which had become an integral part of the resort's identity.

This pattern of attrition also raised concerns regarding the future continuity of the project's sustainability ethos. Observations indicated a generational shift in commitment among some members of the local community, prompting internal reflections on the long-term viability of maintaining the resort's conservation-focused mission in the absence of consistent local engagement and leadership.

d) Guest Expectations and Eco-Sensitive Hospitality Practices: Another operational adjustment involved the provision of in-room amenities. Guests frequently requested electric kettles in cottages to make tea or coffee during late hours. While the management agreed to provide kettles, they deliberately avoided supplying sugar. This decision was based on the ecological sensitivity of the location. The team communicated to guests that sweeteners, particularly sugar, could attract ants, insects, and rodents—subsequently increasing the likelihood of snake presence due to the food chain dynamics. To mitigate this risk while still accommodating guest needs, the resort offered alternatives such as artificial sweeteners or stevia, thus maintaining a balance between guest comfort and environmental safety.

Government Policies and External Pressures

Wilderness operates in a geographically sensitive area adjoining the Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary, making it particularly vulnerable to external policy decisions. For example, the National Wildlife Action Plan (National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031), 2019) and the Eco-Tourism Policy (National Ecotourism Policy, 2004) provide guiding frameworks for biodiversity conservation and the promotion of responsible tourism practices; which this peripheral tourism enterprise (PTE) is required to comply with. The resort has had to navigate the implications of infrastructure proposals, such as highway expansions and industrial development projects, which threaten the ecological integrity of the region. These projects often overlook the long-term ecological costs in favour of short-term economic gains. The absence of clear demarcations between eco-sensitive zones and buffer areas creates uncertainty for nature-based tourism initiatives. Moreover, the lack of a tailored policy framework for eco-tourism enterprises means that resorts like Wilderness must align with conventional tourism benchmarks, despite their distinct ethos and operational models.

Also, though it was a challenge to procure 'carbon credit certification' and 'ecotel status' from the desired institutions (as discussed under 'financial institution and compliance', earlier); availing of these certifications have been beneficial for Wilderness.

Seasonal Fluctuations in Tourism Demand

Tourism at Wildernest experiences a pronounced seasonal pattern, with peak visitor influx during the dry months when flora and fauna are most visible and accessible. In contrast, the monsoon season sees a dip in tourist arrivals due to restricted access, slippery terrain, and increased wildlife movement, all of which limit mobility and outdoor activities. During the monsoon season, although accessibility becomes challenging, Wildernest explores opportunities to engage niche nature enthusiasts. For instance, the occurrence of rare luminescent fungi between August and mid-September presents an opportunity for experiential promotion. As noted during field interviews, the team is considering promoting such unique ecological events to draw interest among visitors seeking immersive forest experiences.

Also, during this time, the resort shifts focus towards maintenance work, infrastructure reinforcement, and ecological monitoring. Additionally, it engages in academic and research collaborations to sustain relevance and partial income during the lean season. However, balancing financial sustainability while maintaining low-impact operations remains an ongoing challenge.

Wildlife-Human Interaction Management

Wildernest's location within a biodiverse forest region naturally invites human-wildlife interactions. While sightings of birds, amphibians, and small mammals are highlights for visitors, the occasional proximity of larger fauna such as snakes or wild boars necessitates safety protocols. Management maintains a strict no-food-in-room policy to avoid attracting rodents and insects, which can in turn invite predators like snakes. Guests are briefed about the ecological rationale behind such restrictions, including the absence of sugary items in-room. While the resort has created awareness signage and conducts regular sensitisation sessions, ensuring consistent visitor compliance is a delicate and ongoing task.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Issues

Wildernest's non-conventional design—minimal lighting, absence of hoardings, and nature-integrated architecture—initially hindered its qualification for star ratings

and government subsidies. The resort's attempt to secure recognition as an eco-tourism venture required negotiations and on-site inspections that went beyond standard parameters. Regulatory frameworks continue to reflect a bias towards built-up infrastructure and visible amenities, leaving little room for context-specific innovations. Bureaucratic delays in obtaining permits for even minor modifications are common, as is the need to repeatedly justify design decisions rooted in ecological considerations. The lack of a separate classification for conservation-first resorts adds to the operational ambiguity.

Case 4: NV Eco farm (NV Eco Agro Tourism Pvt Ltd)

NV Eco farm (NV Eco Agro Tourism Pvt Ltd - registered name) is set in the village Panchayat of Kirlapal-Dabal, situated in Dharbandora Taluka of South Goa District. The village has 1,689 households and a population of 6,307, out of which more than 4000 belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes (Government of Goa, 2017).

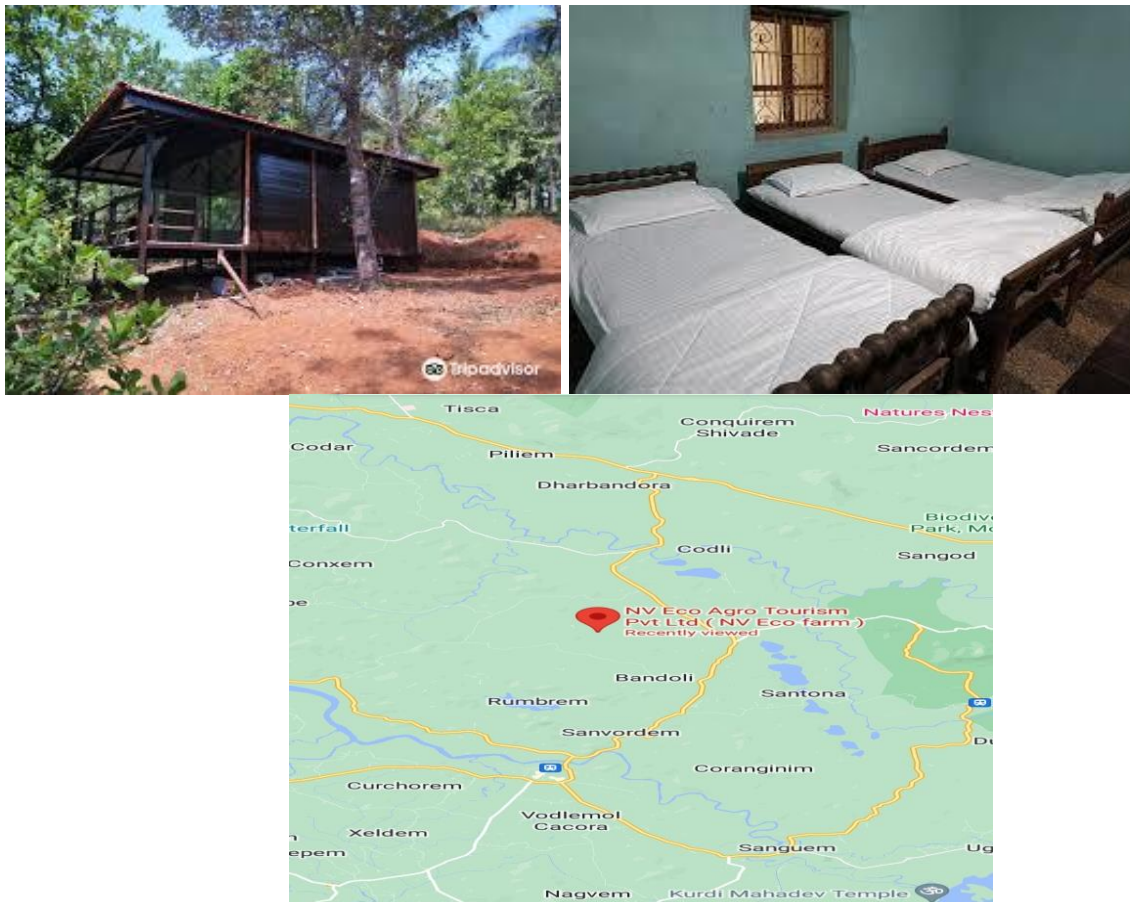


Fig 4.37: Top Left- Cottage at NV Eco farm; Top Right – Homestay facility for families
Below: Road map to NV Eco farm

Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

NV Eco farm's sustainable agricultural processes include adoption of water harvesting techniques, multilayer cropping, biogas generation, solar fencing etc. Spread over 60 acres of land and equipped with 28 employees, the farm is a unique combination of a restaurant with free wi-fi, agriculture, horticulture, vegetables, spices, plantation crops and a tourism facility. Adventure sport, bird watching, morning trails,

Nakshatra Vana (Astral Garden), butterfly park, swimming pond etc are the added attractions at the venue (<https://www.nvecofarm.com>).

The Beginning

Ms Smita Patil, a banker by profession, found herself seeking an alternative to her monotonous 9 am-5 pm work routine. Whenever the stress of city life overwhelmed her, she sought refuge at her family's ancestral farm in Dabal to unwind. Her in-laws, Mr Krishna Jagannath Patil and Mr Vinayak Jagannath Patil, were progressive-thinking farmers who had transformed their 60-acre land in the western ghats over 60 years into a modern farm. They took great care to preserve the biodiversity of the area. It was during these visits that the idea of creating a relaxation area for like-minded individuals struck Smita.

Her husband, Mr Mahesh Patil, equipped with a degree in agriculture, a postgraduate degree in management, and 25 years of corporate experience with expertise in environmental sustainability, also felt the need for a getaway destination for relaxation. Around the same time, Mr Mahesh Patil encountered some challenges in his corporate life, which further motivated him to take the idea of converting their ancestral land into an eco-agro tourism project seriously. Together, they were determined to put their ancestral property to good use, preserve the existing agricultural plantations, and create a place where people could rejuvenate amidst nature while also offering educational opportunities for productive engagement.

"Instead of selling ancestral land and creating yet another concrete jungle, we decided to convert it into a place where people could rejuvenate amidst nature, while also providing an educational way to spend an entire day productively." (Mahesh Patil, personal communication, Feb 2, 2021)



Fig 4.38: Left-Mr. Mahesh Patil; Right – Smita Patil
Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

With unwavering determination, the couple conceptualized the infrastructure with the help of architect Yogesh Pednekar, laying the foundation for a full-fledged 'agro and eco-tourism destination.' Combining Mr. Patil's expertise in infrastructural planning, procurement of licenses, and permissions, the project was officially registered as NV Eco Agro Tourism Pvt Ltd (NV Eco farm for short), a fitting tribute with initials derived from the names of their beloved daughters. The project is registered under the micro and small enterprise (MSME) category. The organizational structure is simple, with both Smita and Mahesh Patil serving as the guiding force. They have a manager responsible for administration, and there are 28 permanent employees. Among these, one is a receptionist cum cashier, one a cook, and two are employed as helpers/servers in the restaurant or as guides for agro trips and adventure activities. The rest of the employees work on the farm, and their work schedules are flexible, rotating between the restaurant, touristic activities, and farm duties based on the needs.

Initial Product Offerings: Initially NV Eco farm entertained only day visitations to its plantation areas and food at the in-house restaurant. Agro eco-tourism activities such as backwater cruises, visits to the 'Nakshatra Garden' and butterfly park, treks, spice plantation tours, and bird watching were offered. The unique aspect of the 'Nakshatra Garden/Van' is that, it is an astral garden developed on the concept of birth sign (zodiac sign) and corresponding plant/tree recommended for the particular zodiac sign. It is based on ancient Indian scriptures like Panchangas and Aurvedas and involves a scientific combination of astrology with Ayurveda. In sync with the six ritu (seasons), 12 raashis (zodiac signs), 27 nakshatras (stars) there are specific trees (kshemkar and dharmodishi) that are meant to be beneficial for the person of that raashi (zodiac sign). The trees which are homogenous to a particular raashi devata (the goddess of the zodiac sign) are identified and planted in the astral garden. There are signages against each tree explaining the biological name of the tree, its medicinal properties and the beneficial effects it has on a person with a particular zodiac sign. It is believed that as one sits underneath the tree of his zodiac sign and chants a specific mantra that matches with the element (earth, water, fire, air, space) dominant in his body; it brings higher levels of awareness in the individual.

The farm adopted sustainable agriculture practices such as water harvesting techniques, multilayer cropping, biogas generation, solar fencing, and organic farming.



Fig 4.39: Top Left - Backwater cruise; Top Centre - Spice plantation; Top Right – Nakshatra Garden and butterfly park
Bottom Left- Bird watching; Bottom Centre- Rain water harvesting; Bottom Right – Solar fencing

Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

Marketing Efforts: Initially, NV Eco farm operated on a small scale and ran as a pilot study by the promoters. They individually reached out to various five-star hotels in Goa to attract tourists who wanted to explore hinterland tourism after experiencing the typical sun-sand-sea tourism. They also collaborated with tourist taxi owners, hoping they would direct their clients to the farm. However, the taxi drivers demanded a 50% share of the revenue and free lunch for each tourist they brought, leading to financial challenges for NV Eco farm.

Growth

Diversification of Offerings: As NV Eco farm gained popularity, the enterprising Patil's realized the potential to diversify their offerings and cater to a broader range of visitors. They introduced stays in air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned rooms in the farmhouse, along with four modern air-conditioned cottages (three wooden and one laterite), and vast plantation areas for various agro eco-tourism activities. Apart from the earlier existing activities; night camps, spice plantation tours (now with an impressive variety of 125 species), cashew fruit and feni extraction tours, adventure activities (wall climbing, rappelling, cycling and trekking), angling, archery, barbecues,

bird watching, and more were included. NV Eco farm became a sanctuary for those seeking not only rejuvenation but also a deeper connection with nature.

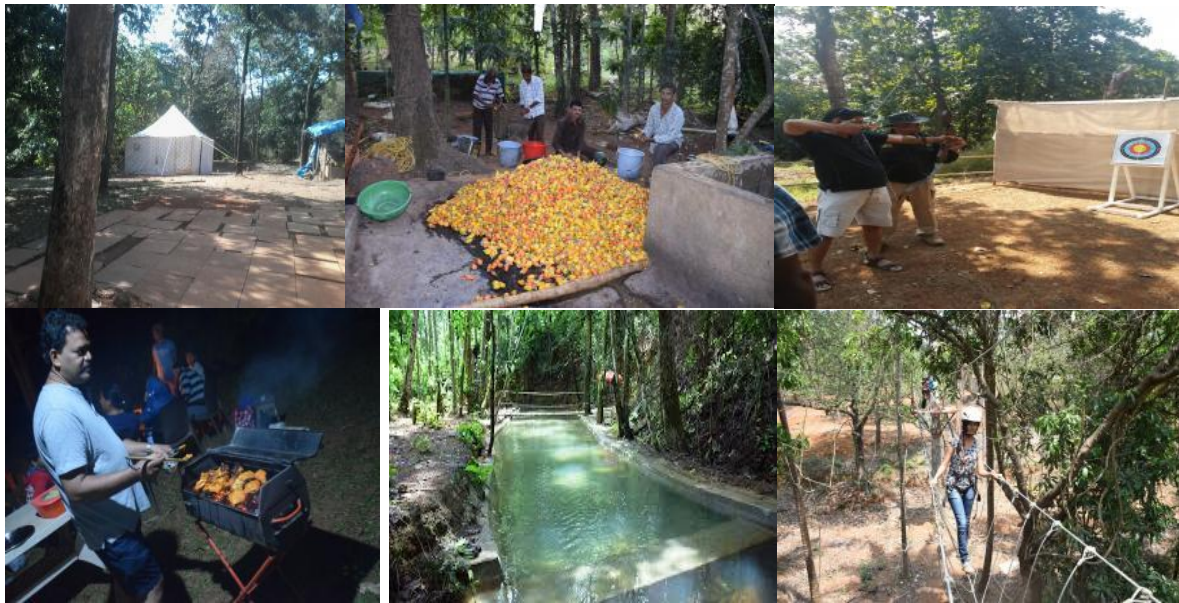


Fig 4. 40: Top Left- Night camp; Top Centre- Cashew fruit collected for extraction; Top Right – Archery
Below Left – Barbecue at the venue; Below Centre – Natural swimming pool; Below Right – Adventure activity

Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

Marketing Strategies: The growth of NV Eco farm was possible through their strategic marketing efforts. They targeted domestic and international tourists through a tie-up with Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), ensuring that tourists visiting Doodhsagar waterfalls under the government scheme would be routed to NV Eco farm for lunch. They also formed partnerships with schools to attract students on educational trips, offering group discounts to ensure a steady flow of school children engaging in nature studies. Word-of-mouth publicity from these students and teachers contributed to a significant increase in Goan visitors. Clientele is 90% locals (Goan customers) and 10% domestic tourists. Social media platforms, including Facebook and WhatsApp, and their website played a crucial role in attracting visitors from different states, while a small percentage came through the farm's listing on Air BnB.

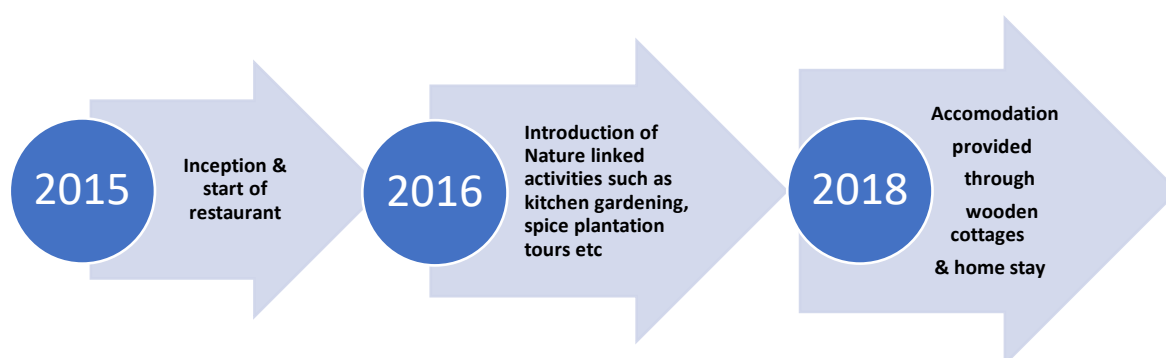


Fig 4.41: A flow chart of the changes incorporated from inception till 2018
Source: Researcher's own contribution

Table 4. 8: Financial Figures of NV Eco farm from 2015 to 2021 –

NV Eco farm								
S.No	Particular's	Figures For the Year Ending						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
1	Number of Cottages				3	3	3	3
2	Number of homestays				1	1	1	1
3	Total Revenue ₹			1822644	2110727	2402650	2224838	2588179
4	Total Expenditure			1789248	2086255	2364613	2193735	2547660
5	Tax			33396	24472	38037	31103	40519
6	Profit After Tax			33396	17166	28147	23058	30737

Source: Promoter: Sh. Mahesh Patil- 22.8.2022

Resources at NV Eco farm

Tangible Resources

Set against the backdrop of the Western Ghats, NV Eco Farm benefits from a range of tangible resources that support its operations as both a sustainable farm and an eco-tourism destination. The cornerstone of its physical infrastructure is the 60-acre ancestral land, which has been progressively developed over the years to offer a harmonious blend of natural beauty, agricultural productivity, and visitor engagement.

A) Land and Built Infrastructure: The expanse of land, carefully maintained over generations, houses a variety of built structures catering to both tourism and agriculture. The architectural design of the restaurant, cottages, and homestay facilities reflects the rustic charm of the region while offering touristic comforts. These include three wooden and one laterite air-conditioned cottage, along with a farmhouse

that accommodates both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned rooms. Additional features such as freshwater, non-chlorinated swimming ponds and biomass/biogas-based water heating systems reinforce the venture's eco-conscious approach.



Fig 4.42: Top – Images of different cottage interiors; Centre – Images of cottage exterior and fresh water swimming pools; Bottom – Images of the restaurant

Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

b) Agricultural and Recreational Facilities: In support of agro-eco tourism, NV Eco Farm has developed a range of activity-based zones. These include spice plantation trails featuring over 125 species, cashew fruit and feni extraction units, a Nakshatra Garden, butterfly park, and adventure zones for activities like rappelling, cycling, wall climbing, and archery. The farm is also equipped to offer bird-watching, angling, trekking, and barbecue setups. Tools and equipment necessary for conducting these activities are maintained on-site, contributing to operational ease and visitor safety.

In addition to offering immersive agricultural experiences, NV Eco Farm also generates revenue by selling its organic farm produce—including coconuts, cashew

nuts, pineapples, bananas, and kokum—at its in-house restaurant. Related products from these fruits and vegetables such as chips, pickles, spices, oils etc. are sold at the restaurant and the booking/ commercial office of the farm at Panjim. The availability of fresh, farm-to-table produce is well-received by guests and adds to the authentic agro-eco tourism experience. This farm-to-fork model not only enhances guest satisfaction but also supports the farm’s financial sustainability by turning agricultural output into a direct income stream.



Fig 4.43: Top – Images of Feni extraction units; Bottom – Images of adventure activities
Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

c) Financial Capital and Investment: The initial financial backing for NV Eco Farm came from the personal equity of the Patil family, bolstered by bank loans. This capital was instrumental in transforming the ancestral land into a structured eco-agro tourism project with necessary infrastructure and services. The financial journey was not without its hurdles. One of the key challenges involved dealing with local taxi operators, who demanded high commissions and complimentary meals, thereby putting pressure on profit margins. Rather than accepting these unsustainable terms, the promoters pivoted towards alternative marketing and visitor acquisition strategies.

d) Strategic Partnerships and Market Positioning: Financial resilience was supported by a series of strategic partnerships, particularly with schools and educational institutions, through which the farm positioned itself as a destination for nature-based

learning trips. This approach brought in a consistent stream of student visitors and created local goodwill. Further collaboration with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) helped route government-recognized tourists from nearby attractions like the Doodhsagar waterfalls to NV Eco Farm. Collaborations with some NGOs brought in volunteers who provided vital information on the bird and animal life -both migratory and endemic to the geographic area of the farm, and enhanced knowledge sharing with visitors. These efforts diversified the revenue streams and brought financial stability.



Fig 4. 44: Left – Students learning about multilayer cropping; Centre – Education on reptiles
Right – Students at the spice farm

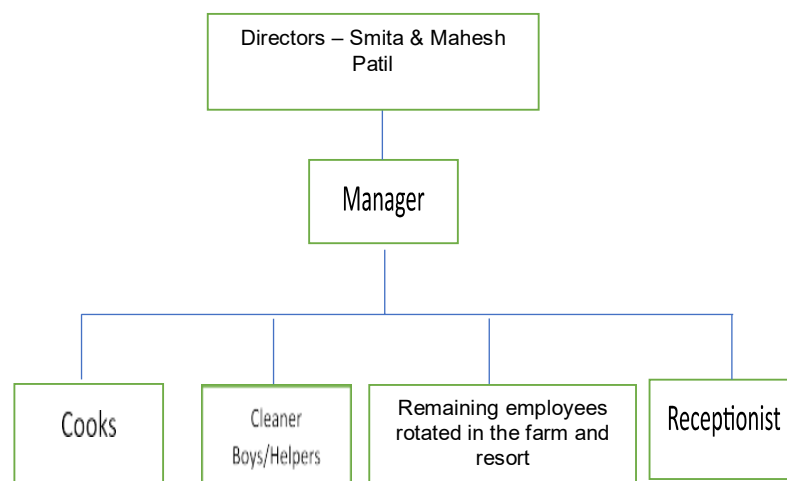
Source: Website NV Eco Farms (10.4.25)

In addition to on-ground partnerships, NV Eco Farm utilized digital platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Airbnb to market its services. These platforms played a critical role in increasing visibility, especially among Goan residents and domestic tourists from neighbouring regions. Today, the clientele is dominated by local visitors (around 90%), with the remainder comprising domestic and a few international tourists.

Intangible Resources

a) Knowledge and Expertise: NV Eco Farm benefits significantly from the combined knowledge base of its promoters. Mr. Mahesh Patil brings with him a rich blend of academic and professional experience, holding a degree in agriculture and a postgraduate qualification in management, along with 25 years of corporate exposure in the domain of environmental sustainability. His expertise has played a pivotal role in shaping the farm's infrastructure, designing eco-tourism offerings, and embedding sustainable practices into the daily functioning of the unit. His familiarity with government systems and licensing procedures enabled smooth registration and compliance with various tourism and business norms.

Ms. Smita Patil's banking background contributed towards efficient financial planning, regulatory understanding, and prudent administrative management. Together, their practical understanding of farming techniques and tourism dynamics enabled the design of educational and leisure experiences that are both engaging and informative. This accumulated expertise functions as a strategic asset that is difficult to replicate and provides long-term value to the enterprise.



Note: *Manager handles booking /itinerary of guests and accounts.

Fig 4.45: NV Eco Farm's Organizational Structure

Source: Researcher's own contribution

b) Reputation and Credibility: Over the years, NV Eco Farm has cultivated a credible reputation among local communities, schools, and tourism agencies as a responsible and authentic agro-eco tourism destination. Its association with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) and repeated collaborations with educational institutions have further enhanced its image as a trustworthy and learning-oriented tourism unit. The eco-conscious operations, no-alcohol policy, and emphasis on nature-friendly practices have helped distinguish NV Eco Farm from other commercial ventures, particularly in Goa's context where mass tourism often overshadows ecological values.

Positive word-of-mouth publicity among locals, students, and educational professionals has steadily built goodwill. The farm's commitment to delivering authentic experiences—such as spice plantation tours, astro-gardens, and nature trails—has fostered a sense of reliability and trust among its clientele, especially Goan residents who make up a major portion of the visitor base.

c) **Organizational Culture and Values:** The ethos of NV Eco Farm is rooted in environmental stewardship, inclusivity, and community engagement. The decision to convert ancestral property into a tourism-cum-agriculture learning space rather than commercial real estate reflects a long-term vision committed to sustainability and heritage preservation. The values practiced at the farm promote not just ecological conservation but also local empowerment. The working culture is informal yet adaptive, with flexibility in task allocation across restaurant, farm, and tourism functions. Staff are rotated and trained in multiple skills, creating a collaborative and participative work environment.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, these values were further tested and demonstrated. Despite the prolonged downturn in tourism activity and associated revenue losses, NV Eco Farm retained its entire workforce without salary reductions. Approximately ₹3 lakhs per month were spent on employee salaries during this period, as confirmed by internal sources (Santosh Shetkar -Manager NV Eco farms, personal communication, Jan 16, 2021). This decision, although financially demanding, reflected the enterprise's commitment to employee well-being and continuity. The action reinforced internal morale and strengthened the farm's social capital within the local community, which continues to support the venture through word-of-mouth and loyal patronage.

This value system, embedded in the leadership of the Patil family, influences both strategic decisions and daily operations. It ensures that growth and profit are pursued without compromising on ethical considerations, environmental impact, or community well-being.

d) **Brand Identity and Uniqueness of Experience:** NV Eco Farm has cultivated a unique identity based on its hybrid offerings—a fusion of agriculture, adventure, and eco-tourism, underpinned by educational and spiritual elements. Attractions like the Nakshatra Van (astral garden based on Indian astrology and Ayurveda), the butterfly park, spice trails, reptile education zones, and hands-on activities such as feni extraction or angling contribute to the distinctiveness of the farm experience. Unlike typical resorts or agro-tourism units that focus solely on relaxation or agriculture, NV Eco Farm integrates learning with leisure, appealing to schools, families, and nature enthusiasts.

e) Relationships and Networks: The promoters have invested time and effort in building linkages with educational institutions, government tourism agencies, local stakeholders, and service providers. Their collaboration with GTDC ensures a steady influx of tourists visiting nearby natural sites like Doodhsagar waterfalls. Meanwhile, their outreach to schools has resulted in repeat visits from student groups and institutional endorsements. These relational resources enhance the farm's visibility and reduce dependency on traditional intermediaries like travel agents or taxi drivers, whose high commission demands once posed financial challenges. Furthermore, the relationship with local employees, who are trained in modern farming and tourism support activities, reflects a mutually beneficial human capital network.

Natural Resource Utilization

Located at the summit of the Western Ghats, a recognized biodiversity hotspot, NV Eco Farm benefits from a rich natural landscape that serves both as a resource base and a tourism attraction. The farm spans 60 acres of fertile land, incorporating multi layered plantations, natural forest patches, and freshwater streams. These natural endowments form the foundation of the farm's eco-tourism and agri-tourism model.

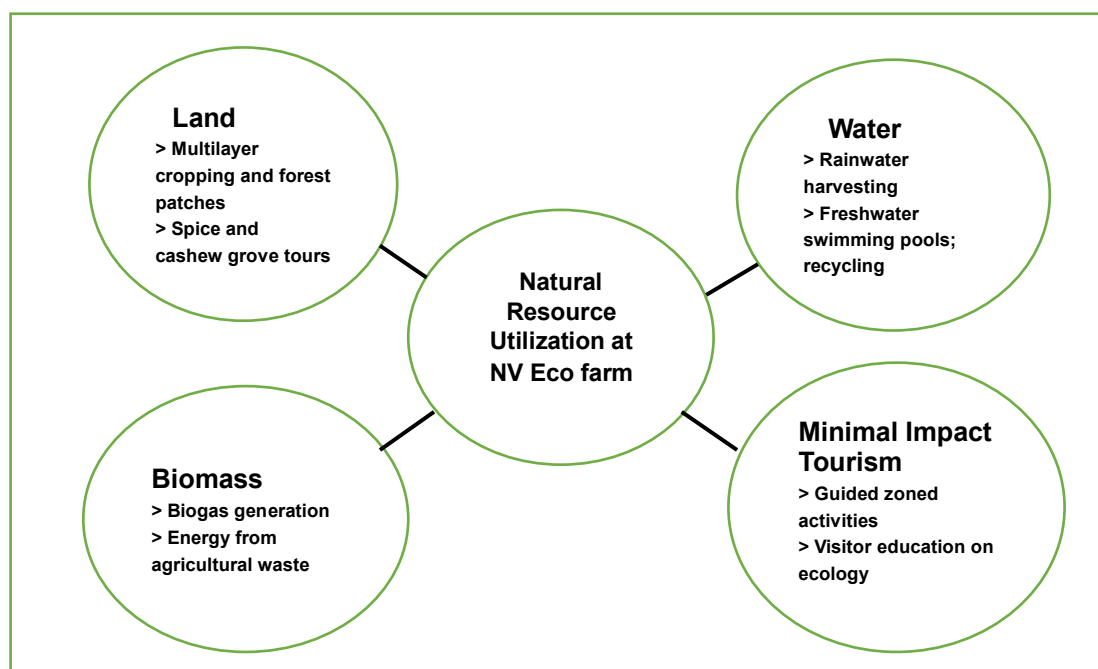


Fig 4.46: Diagrammatic representation of the Natural resource utilization at NV Eco farm
Source: Researcher's own contribution

The farm's core activities are designed to complement and sustain its natural surroundings. Spice plantation tours are conducted on land where over 125 species are cultivated, while seasonal tours on cashew fruit and feni extraction make use of naturally growing cashew groves. Agro-tourism demonstrations, such as multilayer cropping, vermicomposting, and organic farming techniques, are practiced using the farm's own soil, water, and biomass resources.

NV Eco Farm has integrated water resource management through the use of traditional and modern techniques. Rainwater harvesting systems and bunding help retain groundwater levels, and freshwater, non-chlorinated swimming pools serve both recreational and educational purposes. The water used on the farm is recycled where possible, reducing the ecological footprint of tourism-related activities.

The use of biomass heaters and biogas units showcases how agricultural waste is converted into energy, reducing dependency on conventional fuels. Solar fencing and the avoidance of chemical pesticides further indicate a conscious approach toward preserving the ecological integrity of the land.

Tourist engagement is structured around minimal-impact interaction with the environment. Activities such as trekking, birdwatching, and angling are conducted under guidance and within designated zones to avoid disruption to local flora and fauna. Visitors are also educated on the region's ecological significance, reinforcing the farm's ethos of awareness-building alongside recreation.

Strategic Initiatives and Innovations

NV Eco Farm's evolution from a traditional family-owned plantation into a vibrant agro-eco-tourism destination is marked by a series of strategic initiatives and innovations. These decisions reflect a proactive approach to sustainability, resource optimization, and experiential tourism, all while aligning with local environmental and socio-economic contexts.

a) Transformation of Ancestral Land into an Agro-Eco-Tourism Venture: At the heart of NV Eco Farm's strategy was the vision to repurpose ancestral farmland into a meaningful and economically viable tourism experience. Mr. Mahesh Patil initially

secured a certification from the State Government for an eco-tourism project involving the construction of 500 accommodation units. However, rather than monetizing the land through conventional real estate or commercial development, the promoters, Mahesh and Smita Patil, chose to integrate agriculture, conservation, and tourism in a mutually reinforcing model. Taking sustainability and carrying capacity of the venture into consideration; Mr. Patil intends constructing a maximum of 25 cottages in the future on his 60-acre property. This decision was both strategic and symbolic—preserving heritage while creating a forward-looking enterprise.

b) **Piloting and Gradual Scaling:** Initially, the venture began as a pilot with limited offerings—day visits, farm-to-table meals, plantation tours, and simple nature experiences. This cautious start allowed the promoters to test the waters and assess the feasibility of eco-tourism in a peripheral location. Based on visitor feedback and market response, the offerings were gradually expanded to include accommodations, night trails, adventure activities, and more immersive agro experiences.

c) **Product Diversification and Thematic Innovation:** A significant innovation was the conceptualization and development of the Nakshatra Vana—an astral garden inspired by ancient Indian wisdom that links astrology with plant life. This garden not only differentiated NV Eco Farm from other agro-tourism destinations but also introduced a reflective and spiritual dimension to the tourist experience. Other unique offerings included cashew fruit and feni extraction demonstrations (e.g. cashew fruit harvesting, juice extraction, feni distillation, tasting and cashew nut processing), seasonal barbecues, and butterfly and bird watching trails—strategically appealing to nature lovers, families, school groups, and wellness seekers. Various activities viz - rappelling, cycling, wall climbing, archery and night camps attracted the adventure seekers.

d) **Sustainability-Oriented Infrastructure and Services:** NV Eco Farm incorporated sustainability into the core of its operations through biogas heating systems, multilayer cropping, rainwater harvesting, and solar fencing. These practices were not only eco-conscious but also cost-effective in the long term. Freshwater, non-chlorinated pools, and biomass-fuelled hot water provision in cottages further reinforced the eco-friendly narrative.

e) Response to Market Challenges and Partnership Strategy: When confronted with challenges like high commission demands from taxi drivers, NV Eco Farm opted for alternative market access strategies. The promoters developed direct relationships with schools and partnered with the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) to tap into educational and government-supported tourism flows. Additionally, the venture utilized digital platforms and social media effectively, minimizing reliance on intermediaries.

f) Crisis Management through Ethical Decision-Making: During the COVID-19 pandemic, NV Eco Farm did not retrench employees or reduce wages (Santosh Shetkar -Manager NV Eco farms, personal communication, Jan 16, 2021), despite significant revenue losses. This decision, although financially strenuous, was a deliberate strategic choice that enhanced internal morale and built long-term goodwill with the local community. It positioned the promoters as socially responsible entrepreneurs, strengthening their stakeholder relationships. During this lean period, Mr. Patil diverted attention from the crisis by gainfully engaging the staff in plantations. They planted 1,000 coconut trees and increased the number of cashew plantations, spices, and vegetables. They also explored value addition through jackfruit processing. Thus, activities were more focused on agriculture and helped the staff cope with emotional stress through productive physical engagement.

g) Skill Development and Local Inclusion: Another notable initiative was the training of local youth in sustainable farming techniques, guiding tours, and operating eco-friendly systems. This effort ensured that employment created by the venture was inclusive and capacity-building in nature. By integrating local human resources into multiple operational areas—farm, hospitality, and tourism activities—the initiative fostered community participation and minimized migration pressures.

h) Blending Traditional Knowledge with Modern Management: NV Eco Farm's innovation lies in harmonizing traditional farming wisdom and local customs with structured planning and professional execution. The dual expertise of the promoters—one with a corporate management background and the other with roots in agriculture and finance—enabled this synthesis, resulting in a well-rounded and resilient business model.

Table 4. 9: Summary of the key strategic initiatives and innovations at NV Eco Farm

Sr. No.	Strategic Initiative / Innovation	Description (Short)
a)	Transformation of Ancestral Land	Repurposed family farmland into a sustainable agro-eco-tourism venture preserving heritage and ecology.
b)	Piloting and Gradual Scaling	Started with limited offerings, gradually expanded based on visitor feedback and market demand.
c)	Product Diversification & Thematic Innovation	Introduced Nakshatra Vana, feni demos, butterfly/bird trails, and adventure activities for various tourist segments.
d)	Sustainability-Oriented Infrastructure	Implemented biogas, multilayer cropping, rainwater harvesting, solar fencing, and eco-friendly pools.
e)	Market Response & Partnerships	Avoided high taxi commissions; partnered with GTDC and schools; promoted via digital platforms.
f)	Ethical Crisis Management	Retained all staff during COVID-19, building goodwill and local trust.
g)	Skill Development & Local Inclusion	Trained local youth in farming and eco-tourism, encouraging employment and reducing migration.
h)	Fusion of Traditional & Modern Practices	Combined indigenous knowledge with professional management to create a resilient and innovative model.

Source: Researcher's own contribution

Sustainable Resource Management Practices

At the heart of NV Eco Farm's operations lies a deeply rooted philosophy of sustainability, reflected across all dimensions of its functioning. The Patil couple's approach to resource use and community engagement has been shaped by an intrinsic respect for nature, a commitment to responsible tourism, and a long-term vision for local development. Their efforts go beyond symbolic gestures and translate into well-integrated, practical initiatives that conserve natural resources while generating economic and social value.

a) Sustainable Agricultural Practices: NV Eco Farm adopts eco-conscious farming techniques that reflect both traditional wisdom and scientific knowledge. The practice of multilayer cropping—growing different types of crops at varying heights—optimizes land use and enhances biodiversity, which in turn helps maintain ecological balance on the farm. Organic inputs such as compost and cow dung are used instead of chemical fertilizers, reducing soil degradation and improving long-term productivity. Intercropping with spices, fruits, and medicinal plants further boosts sustainability while providing varied agricultural outputs for agro-tourism education.

The farm also employs rainwater harvesting systems, which capture and store monsoon water for year-round agricultural use. These systems ensure water self-sufficiency even during dry months and reflect the Patil's' proactive approach to resource planning.

b) **Energy Efficiency and Waste Reduction:** Energy use at NV Eco Farm is carefully managed to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Biogas units using cow dung and organic waste generate fuel for cooking and heating water. These installations not only recycle waste but also reduce the farm's carbon footprint. Solar fencing, which is used to protect plantations from wild animals, demonstrates the thoughtful application of renewable energy for functional utility.

Freshwater, non-chlorinated swimming pools are maintained on the premises, offering visitors a natural and chemical-free recreational experience. This aligns with the farm's broader ecological philosophy of preserving water quality and minimizing chemical usage on-site.

c) **Eco-Conscious Infrastructure and Regulations:** The physical infrastructure—including homestays, restaurant, and cottages—has been constructed using regionally available materials like laterite and wood, helping to blend built structures into the natural landscape. Design elements prioritize ventilation, natural lighting, and energy conservation.

NV Eco Farm strictly adheres to policies that discourage environmentally harmful practices. The restaurant enforces a no-alcohol policy, and the use of firecrackers is prohibited during festivals or celebrations. These decisions reflect an effort to foster a peaceful and non-disruptive ecosystem for both wildlife and guests.

d) **Social Sustainability and Community Empowerment:** A significant aspect of the farm's sustainable practices lies in its deep engagement with the local community. NV Eco Farm employs 28 individuals from nearby villages, providing them with stable livelihoods in a peripheral tourism economy. More importantly, these employees are trained in both modern and sustainable farming techniques, equipping them with transferable skills that promote long-term community resilience.

This commitment to people-centric development was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. While many enterprises resorted to layoffs or salary cuts, Mr. Patil ensured that all employees continued receiving full salaries, despite reduced revenues. This gesture, though financially challenging, cemented his reputation as a socially responsible entrepreneur and strengthened the local community's trust and loyalty toward the venture.

Community Engagement Programs

NV Eco Farm's success story is closely intertwined with the active involvement and empowerment of the local community. From its inception, the venture was envisioned not merely as a tourism destination but as a platform for inclusive growth—where the surrounding community would not just benefit from tourism but participate meaningfully in its development. Community engagement at NV Eco Farm has taken multiple forms, ranging from employment and training to participatory initiatives that enhance both local livelihoods and cultural identity.

a) Local Employment and Skill Development: One of the primary ways in which NV Eco Farm engages with the local community is through direct employment. The farm currently employs 28 individuals from nearby villages in a variety of roles—including agriculture, hospitality, guiding, and maintenance. Rather than limiting them to unskilled labour, the Patil's have made deliberate efforts to train the staff in eco-tourism operations, sustainable farming practices, and visitor engagement. This approach has helped build local capacity and instil a sense of ownership among the employees.

Staff are often cross-trained, allowing them to contribute flexibly across departments—a practice that not only increases their competence but also ensures the farm's resilience during peak seasons or emergencies.

b) Involvement in Cultural Showcasing and Agro-Education: Community members also play an active role in conducting agro-tourism experiences and showcasing local traditions. During plantation tours or cashew feni extraction demonstrations, locals share their lived knowledge and generational practices with tourists. This not only enhances visitor experiences but also instils pride and recognition for indigenous knowledge systems.

NV Eco Farm regularly hosts educational trips for school children, where local farmers and staff members lead interactive sessions on farming methods, spice cultivation, and biodiversity.

c) **Support During Crisis and Social Solidarity:** The spirit of community engagement was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the financial difficulties faced during lockdowns and reduced tourist footfalls, Mr. Patil ensured that no employee was laid off, and full salaries were paid throughout. This decision was widely appreciated by the local community.

d) **Sourcing and Supporting Local Enterprises:** Wherever possible, NV Eco Farm also sources its requirements locally—be it vegetables, construction materials, or services. This support to peripheral businesses and producers helps circulate income within the local economy and fosters a mutually beneficial ecosystem.

The farm's no-alcohol and no-firecracker policies during events also align with local values and environmental concerns, avoiding disruptions to nearby communities and ecosystems.

Navigating Operational Realities in an Eco-Sensitive Environment

Operating an ecotourism venture within a sensitive natural landscape comes with a unique set of practical challenges—ranging from financial constraints and infrastructural limitations to labour-related complexities and socio-cultural expectations. NV Eco Farm, situated in the hinterlands of Goa, reflects these operational realities, as it attempts to balance ecological integrity, financial sustainability, and community inclusion in its day-to-day functioning.

a) **Capital-Intensive, Low-Visibility Infrastructure:** Unlike mainstream tourism establishments where capital investments are visibly translated into constructed amenities and rapid returns, NV Eco Farm's foundational investments were rooted in soil, water systems, and ecology. As Mr. Patil described, "There are no buildings, there are no concrete roads—everywhere there is money which has gone into the soil." The early years saw extensive investments in water harvesting structures, spring reconstructions, and the development of a natural swimming pond, with a clear emphasis on resource recycling. The costs associated with these sustainable

infrastructures—often invisible to the casual visitor—required a financial commitment exceeding ₹2 crores, largely self-financed through personal savings, provident funds, and a partial loan.

The journey to break even reflected the slow gestation period typical of peripheral and agro-based tourism. Operational expenses began to stabilize by the third year; however, the recovery of capital investments was projected to span eight to ten years. The absence of spontaneous walk-in tourists, unlike beachside destinations, demanded that the enterprise build its brand through word-of-mouth referrals and carefully curated niche experiences—another factor contributing to delayed financial returns.

b) Labour Dynamics and Cultural Constraints: Human resource management in a rural tourism setting presented additional challenges, particularly in balancing the need for professional consistency with local socio-cultural dynamics. While NV Eco Farm prioritized local employment—hiring staff from surrounding villages for roles such as cook, receptionist, and farm assistants—staff retention and reliability were often hindered by deeply rooted cultural practices.

Employees, embedded in closely-knit communities, frequently requested time off for traditional events, festivals, feasts, and weddings, many of which coincided with peak tourism days like Sundays and public holidays. As Mr. Patil noted, “My Goan fellow wants to take a holiday on a Sunday. How am I supposed to work?” This pattern posed difficulties in maintaining consistent service quality, particularly in tourism, which requires round-the-clock readiness.

In response, the venture supplemented its local workforce with outstation labour from regions like Jharkhand and Karnataka, especially for roles requiring shift flexibility or night duties. However, even these labourers—previously engaged in mining or other industries—presented limitations due to their own cultural expectations and holiday preferences. Over time, the farm evolved a hybrid employment model, with approximately 50% local and 50% migrant workers, complemented by provisions for food, accommodation, and educational support for workers’ families.

c) **Operational Sustainability vs. Economic Leakage:** A subtle tension emerged between efforts to localize benefits and the pragmatic need to ensure uninterrupted operations. Despite substantial local sourcing—for groceries, supplies, and auxiliary services—the venture was occasionally subject to concerns over "economic leakage," particularly when labour had to be sourced externally. However, as Mr. Patil clarified, "If I don't have people to do business on a Sunday and work only five days a week, the business will not run." These statements reveal the fine line between idealistic goals of community empowerment and the practical necessities of service-sector sustainability.

NV Eco Farm's story demonstrates how operational realities in eco-sensitive areas are shaped by a combination of contextual resource constraints, infrastructural choices, and human behavioural patterns. It highlights the importance of long-term vision, adaptive staffing strategies, and financial resilience in sustaining such ventures—not just ecologically, but also economically and socially.

Government Policies and External Pressures

The development and sustenance of peripheral agro-ecotourism ventures like NV Eco Farm are deeply intertwined with the broader policy environment and institutional support mechanisms. While such ventures operate at the intersection of agriculture and tourism, they often fall through the gaps of clearly defined policy frameworks, leaving them exposed to financial vulnerability and regulatory ambiguity.

Despite a declared focus on promoting tourism through state-level masterplans and strategic documents, the translation of these policies into tangible, grassroots-level support remains limited. According to the proprietor of NV Eco Farm, Mr. Mahesh Patil; although the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) has listed the farm on its official website and has facilitated some visibility—resulting in a modest annual business contribution of ₹5–6 lakhs—there is no comprehensive or targeted governmental support structure to back such hybrid, niche tourism models.

Legacy incentives, such as the earlier provision of 20% subsidies for new hotel constructions, have now been phased out. Moreover, there remains a lack of specific guidelines or criteria for agro-ecotourism within the current tourism or agricultural

policies. As Mr. Patil emphasized, there is a pressing need for the formulation of well-defined parameters for agro-ecotourism ventures—similar to regulatory frameworks that exist for other sectors such as pharmaceuticals or education. Criteria related to minimum landholdings, ecological practices, and local employment could help standardize the sector while creating eligibility pathways for government incentives and support.

In contrast, benefits within the agricultural domain continue to be structured and more accessible. Farmers can avail subsidies for inputs like fertilizers, equipment, and polyhouse installations. However, these benefits apply to traditional farming activities and not to integrated models that combine agriculture with tourism and education. As a result, entrepreneurs like Patil are left without access to any specialized schemes that recognize or reward the additional risks, investments, and innovation inherent in agro-tourism.

In addition to the absence of structured policy support, NV Eco Farm also contends with external pressures related to shifting tourism patterns, economic fluctuations, and environmental regulations. Being located in a hinterland area, the farm does not benefit from spontaneous tourist footfall like coastal destinations. Instead, it depends on brand-building, word-of-mouth referrals, and seasonal demand—making it highly sensitive to changes in regional tourism flows, public holiday calendars, and larger economic trends. Thus, while NV Eco Farm continues to function as a model of sustainability and grassroots innovation, its growth is hindered by the lack of policy convergence and sector-specific support mechanisms.

Seasonal Fluctuations in Tourism Demand

NV Eco Farm, situated in the hinterlands of Goa, experiences significant seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals. Unlike coastal areas that benefit from steady walk-in tourism, this farm-based venture relies on planned visits and word-of-mouth referrals. Tourist footfall is largely concentrated around weekends, public holidays, and the peak season spanning from October to March. During the monsoons and off-peak months, visitor numbers decline sharply, affecting cash flow and daily operations. These fluctuations create challenges in maintaining a stable revenue stream and in planning staffing and resource allocation throughout the year.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Issues

Operating within a space that straddles agriculture, tourism, and education, NV Eco Farm encounters regulatory ambiguities and bureaucratic hurdles. There is no dedicated policy framework or licensing mechanism tailored to agro-ecotourism ventures, leading to confusion over applicable norms and compliance requirements. While agricultural subsidies are available, they are not structured to support tourism-linked infrastructure or services. Similarly, tourism regulations do not accommodate the unique needs of farm-based experiential models. This policy gap results in procedural delays, limited access to financial incentives, and a general lack of institutional support for the venture.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

As an enterprise rooted in nature-based tourism and organic farming, NV Eco Farm is highly sensitive to the effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Unpredictable rainfall patterns, longer dry spells, and occasional flooding events pose risks to the farm's crops, water management systems, and overall ecological balance. The degradation of nearby forests and springs also threatens the sustainability of local biodiversity, which is central to the eco-tourism experience offered at the farm. These environmental shifts necessitate adaptive practices such as water harvesting, crop diversification, and ecosystem restoration, placing additional pressure on resources and long-term planning.

Case 5: Tanshikar Spice Farm

Tanshikar Spice Farm: This farm is located among the rainforests of Western Ghats at Netravali village in Sanguem taluka of Goa. The village has a total population of 1,709 and 387 families (Census, 2011), wherein the villagers predominantly speak Konkani. The village has a literacy rate of 75.6%. The agro eco-tourism project has 14 eco-lodges in an organic farm with various authentic spices grown on twenty acres of land.



Fig 4.47: Top Left – Eco rest house; Top Centre – Tree house; Top Right – Wooden cottage
Bottom – Road map to Tanshikar Spice Farm

Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

The Beginning

Tanshikar Spice Farm, a 40-acre organic farm founded by Chinmay Tanshikar and assisted by his wife Gauri Tanshikar, specializes in growing a range of real spices on 25 Acres of its land. Beyond growing spices, the farm provides a variety of interesting activities, such as nature hikes, bird-watching excursions, bathing under waterfalls, and adventure sports, giving tourists a complete and distinctive experience.

The journey of Tanshikar Spice Farm began with Chinmay's desire to expand his agricultural business without leaving his ancestral home and village. Having been exposed to the concept of agro-eco-tourism during a visit to another spice farm in 2002-03, Chinmay found the inspiration he needed to embark on this venture. Thus, Tanshikar Spice Farm was born.

The project initially started with day visitations, during which visitors were taken around the 250-year-old ancestral mud-house and the spice plantation. Over time, they diversified their crops to include exotic spices like pepper, vanilla, nutmeg, turmeric, cardamom, cinnamon, coffee, and cocoa, in addition to traditional crops such as coconuts, betel nut, cashew nuts, and bananas. This strategic move not only gave the farm a competitive edge but also boosted revenue through spice sales.



Fig 4.48: Top Left – Pepper; Top Centre – Vanilla; Top Right – nutmeg
Middle Left – Cacao; Middle Centre – Turmeric; Middle Right – Red pepper/chilly
Bottom Left – Cardamom flower; Bottom Right – Betel nut

Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

To further enhance the visitor experience, the farm gradually introduced services like serving food to visitors and providing accommodation. Beginning with mud cottages in 2006, they later expanded to traditional mud cottages with open courtyards in 2010, tree houses in 2014, and wooden cottages in 2018. The farm now boasts of 14 cottages, and Chinmay believes that this is the project's optimal capacity, with no plans for further expansion.



Fig 4.49: Gradual addition of cottages from 2006 to 2018
Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

The range of activities also expanded to include treks to nearby waterfalls and forests, yoga sessions, various games, visits to the bee cultivation centre, cooking classes, and adventure activities for children, among others.



Fig 4.50: Top Left – Sawri waterfall; Top Centre – Yoga session; Top Right – Adventure activity for children
Bottom left – Bee cultivation; Bottom Right – Cookery classes.

Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Tanshikar Spice Farm has never received any loans or subsidies from the government or banks. Chinmay's optimistic approach and dedication to personal development within his current environment have benefited not only the entire village but also the local economy. Despite the villagers' periodic absence from employment, the farm ensures economic security for the village by hiring only locals and purchasing groceries from local stores at a 15% premium over city prices.

The pricing for visitors ranges from day visitation at ₹600 per adult (including lunch) to ₹2750 per person for a 1 night and 2 days stay in the tree houses and wooden cottages. The farm's popularity, combined with the warm hospitality of Gauri and Chinmay, keeps their rooms booked for three consecutive months when the tourist season opens in September.

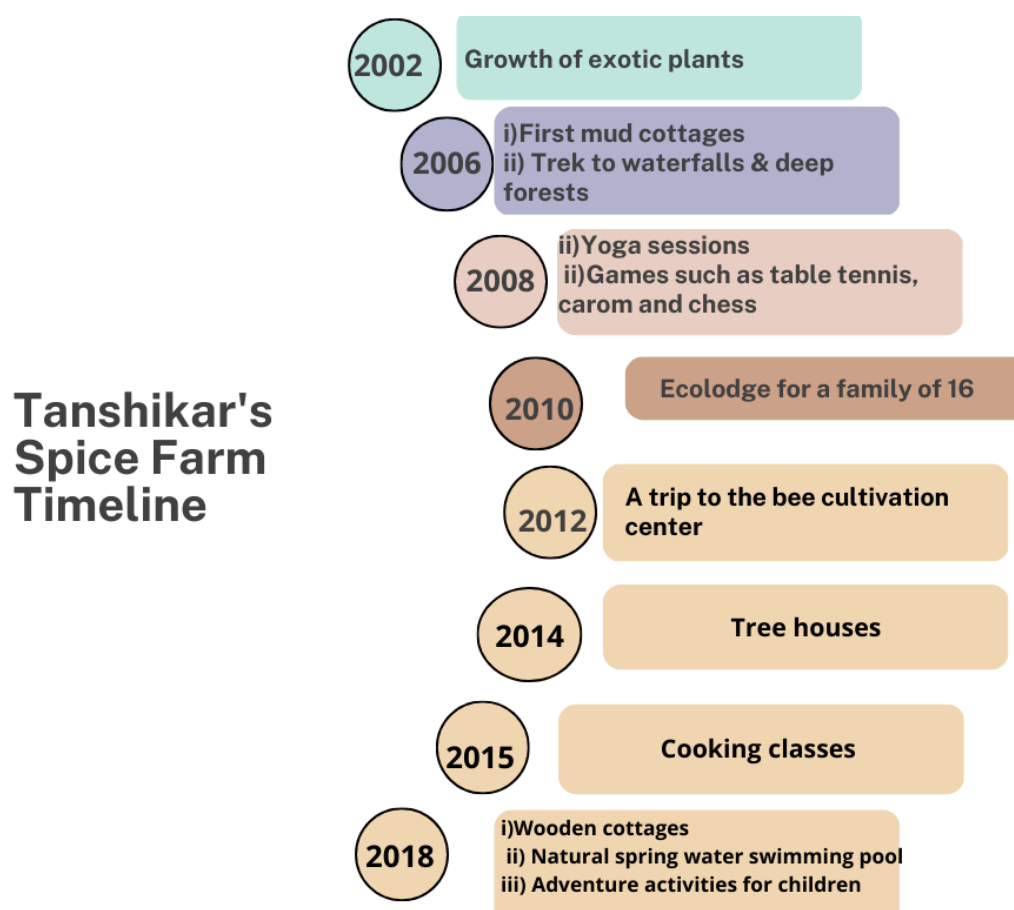


Fig 4.51: A flow chart of the changes incorporated from inception till 2018

Source: Researcher's own contribution

Growth

The financial journey of Tanshikar Spice Farm began with an initial investment of ₹8,00,000 in 2012-13, which was gradually reduced until 2016. However, there was a significant increase in investment in 2017 and 2018, attributed to the construction of wooden cottages, natural swimming pools, and adventure activity facilities for children.

The number of days of booking for each cottage has been consistently increasing, from 120 days in 2012 (7.6% of the year) to 1344 days in 2019. The resort was getting tourists who came to find comfort and security in the remote nature settings, even during the pandemic. Until 2019, the revenue and expense graph exhibit a constant linear increase. However, the pandemic's effects are noticeable in 2020 and 2021, with revenue and expenses falling by 76% and 63%, respectively, in 2020 before progressively increasing in 2021. A noticeable aspect is that Tanshikar Spice Farm achieved break-even and started earning profits from its second year of operation.

Table 4. 10: Financial Figures of Tanshikar Spice farm from 2012 to 2021 –

Farm		Tanshikar Spice									
S.No	Particulars	Figures For the Year Ending									
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Initial Investment	8,00,000	4,00,000	1,00,000	90,000	30,000	1,00,000	30,00,000	2,00,000	20,00,000	2,00,000
1	Number of Cottages	4	6	6	6	6	6	10	10	12	12
2	Max possible										
	Occupancy (days/ year) for __cottages	1600	2160	2160	2160	2160	2160	3200	3200	3400	3400
3	Total days of booking/year for _____ cottages	120	170	432	575	842	907	1152	1344	510	680
4	Occupancy Rate	7.60%	8.00%	20.00%	26.50%	39.00%	42.00%	36.00%	42.00%	15.00%	20%
5	Total Revenue ₹	350000	1000000	1654000	2009000	3500000	3990000	4700000	6700000	1600000	2000000
6	Total Expenditure	270000	570000	900000	1455000	2100000	2500000	3000000	4100000	1500000	1800000
7	Tax	80000	430000	754000	554000	1400000	1490000	1700000	2600000	100000	200000
8	Profit After Tax		301000	527800	387800	980000	1043000	1190000	1820000		140000

Source: Promoter - Chinmay Tanshikar – 22.02.2022

Operations and Impact

Gauri and Chinmay Tanshikar started Tanshikar Spice Farm in 2012, and all of their funding came from their own equity. The farm actively sources local produce,

including fruits, grains, and cereals, employing 25 locals and guaranteeing a 15% premium to help the neighbourhood's economy. The farm provides a wide variety of activities, such as nature hikes, bird watching excursions, apiculture, waterfall bathing, adventure sports, yoga classes, and overnight stays in tree homes and the owner's 250-year-old heritage home.

The farm is committed to environmental sustainability, recycling all wet waste into manure for plants and using betel nut and plantain tree barks to produce organic plates. The husk of betel nuts and coconuts is utilized to make coir products, while organic spices produced on the farm are also sold onsite.

Marketing is primarily done through word-of-mouth publicity, and the farm's website serves as a source of information and bookings. The farm attracts 70% international tourists and 30% domestic tourists, offering a rich cultural experience by involving local participation in farming and promoting the village's lifestyle.

Challenges, such as customer complaints about air-conditioned rooms, music, alcohol consumption, and swimming pool access, have been addressed through mutual consensus, ensuring environmentally sustainable solutions.

Tangible Resources

Physical Assets

Tanshikar Spice Farm comprises several physical assets that support its eco-tourism and spice plantation activities. One of the most distinctive features is the 250-year-old traditional mud house, which serves as both a residence and an educational demonstration site. The structure has three-foot-thick walls, which help regulate indoor temperatures through natural insulation, keeping the interiors cool during summer and warmer during winter. The mud flooring, in addition to its thermal benefits, provides a cushioned surface that reduces the risk of breakages, particularly of crockery and other fragile items.

The farm offers eco-friendly cottages for guests. These are constructed using locally available and natural materials, in line with the farm's low-impact and sustainable tourism ethos. The on-site restaurant provides vegetarian meals prepared

largely from ingredients grown on the farm, adhering to the principle of local and seasonal consumption. Non-vegetarian meals are prepared by a local resident from the village and served at the on-site restaurant.

A natural spring water pool has been developed on the premises. It is made accessible to visitors as part of their experiential stay. This pool is not chemically treated and remains aligned with the farm's organic and natural approach to hospitality.

For visitors interested in adventure tourism, the farm maintains basic equipment for activities like rock climbing, rope walking, jungle trekking, waterfall and spice plantation walks. The property is situated close to a number of trekking routes and natural attractions in the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, and these physical resources help integrate soft adventure into the overall tourist experience.

The farm also contains functional agricultural infrastructure, including plantation areas, drying and processing spaces for spices, and composting units. These contribute to both production and educational aspects of the farm.



Fig 4.52: Top Left – 250-year-old ancestral house; Top Centre – Eco-friendly restaurant; Top Right – Regular meal
Bottom Left – Fresh water swimming pool; Bottom Centre – Spice Walk; Bottom Right – Spices grown at Tanshikar Spice Farm

Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Financial Resources

The initial development of Tanshikar Spice Farm as a tourism site was funded through personal and family investments. Chinmay did not rely on large external funding sources. Instead, the farm has grown organically over time, reinvesting income earned through tourism and spice sales into gradual infrastructural expansion.

Revenue is generated through multiple streams: guided spice tours, overnight stays in cottages, restaurant services, adventure packages, and direct sales of farm produce such as spices and handmade products. The diversity of income sources has helped the farm remain financially viable, especially during periods of external stress such as the COVID-19 pandemic.



Fig 4.53: Sale of spices, jams, pickles, organic plates and cups (manufactured in-house) at the resort counter

Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Although the pandemic caused temporary closures during the lockdown period, the farm experienced a relatively quick recovery due to its location in an isolated area and its perception as a safe, family-run destination. Domestic tourists, especially from nearby regions, contributed to a stable inflow of visitors during the post-lockdown period, particularly from November to February. Chinmay emphasized that growth is deliberately kept organic, without rapid or large-scale expansion. The emphasis has remained on sustained, inclusive development, involving family members in operations and limiting changes to ensure ecological balance is maintained.

Intangible Resources

Human Capital

a) Founder's Expertise: The enterprise is led by Gauri and Chinmay Tanshikar. They manage both the spice plantation and the tourism component of the business. Chinmay's knowledge of organic farming, spice cultivation, and the local biodiversity is grounded in years of hands-on experience and traditional knowledge passed through generations. His ability to communicate these concepts in an engaging manner has made guided tours and educational walks a key offering at the farm.

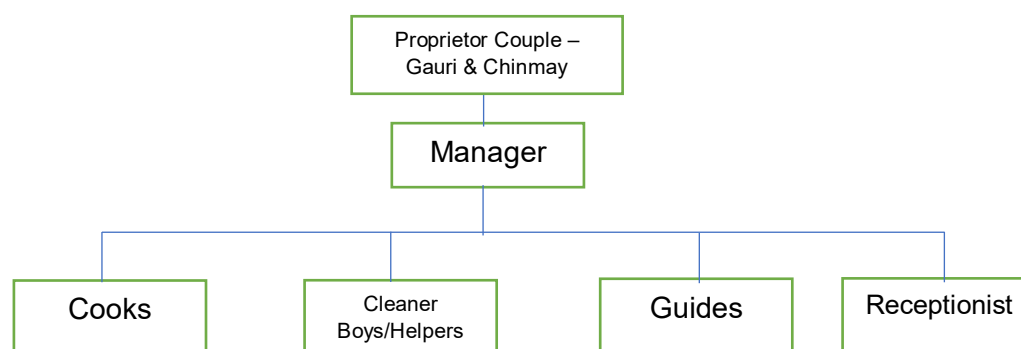


Fig 4.54: Promoters – Gauri and Chinmay Tanshikar
Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Chinmay also brings a sense of environmental responsibility to the business. During interactions, he emphasizes the importance of low-impact tourism, guest behaviour management, and the role of hosts in ensuring responsible tourism practices. For instance, guests are made aware of noise restrictions and are discouraged from organizing parties or events that disturb the natural environment or local community. This proactive approach to guest screening and interaction reflects his commitment to long-term sustainability and preservation of the surrounding ecosystem.

b) Local Workforce: Tanshikar Spice Farm employs members of the local community, particularly for operational tasks such as farm maintenance, hospitality services, guiding tourists, and food preparation. This not only supports the local economy but also ensures that the enterprise remains closely aligned with the socio-cultural context of the region.

The use of a family-based operational model adds another dimension to human capital. Multiple generations within Chinmay's family are involved in daily activities, including accommodation, kitchen work, and farm upkeep. This results in consistent quality and a personalized approach to guest service. Knowledge sharing between the founder, family members, and local staff creates a collaborative learning environment, reinforcing both efficiency and cultural authenticity.



*Gauri and Chinmay handle booking, finance and strategic decisions, Manager handles administrative activities and manages work of remaining employees under him.

Fig 4.55: Tanshikar Spice Farm's Organizational Structure

Source: Researcher's own contribution

Brand Reputation

Over the years, Tanshikar Spice Farm has developed a reputation as a reliable, authentic, and environmentally conscious destination in South Goa. The brand is recognized for its commitment to organic practices, education-oriented tourism, and a non-commercialized farm experience. Repeat visits and word-of-mouth recommendations, especially among nature lovers, school groups, and responsible travellers, have played a central role in its brand building.

Chinmay's philosophy of avoiding mass tourism and screening guests for behavioural suitability has further strengthened the brand's identity. Visitors often associate the farm with peace, learning, and nature immersion rather than just accommodation or sightseeing. During the pandemic, the perception of the farm as a safe, isolated, and family-run location added to its credibility among cautious domestic tourists. Tanshikar Spice Farm has been featured in regional media and blogs, often highlighted as an offbeat destination that offers a meaningful and environmentally sensitive travel experience. The farm was also awarded the 'Best Organic Farmer' award instituted by the Shri Shri Agri Institute Trust on 11th of March 2016 in Delhi at

the hands of Prime Minister Modi (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021). The educational element, including insights into traditional mud architecture, spice processing, and biodiversity, contributes positively to its reputation.



Fig 4.56: Certifications received by the promoters for their eco-agro tourism activities
Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Organizational Culture

The organizational culture at Tanshikar Spice Farm is shaped by a combination of traditional values, environmental consciousness, and a personalized approach to hospitality. Chinmay's leadership emphasizes responsibility over profitability, which is reflected in various operational decisions—such as restrictions on late-night noise, limitation on guest numbers, and refusal to allow unscreened group bookings through third-party portals.

There is an underlying belief in organic and inclusive growth, where expansion is paced and deliberate, ensuring minimal disruption to ecological or social systems. The family-led structure reinforces values such as consistency, care, and authenticity. Staff, many of whom are local, are encouraged to engage with guests not just as service providers but also as cultural ambassadors. The culture promotes learning-by-doing, and the working environment is informal but respectful. The alignment between the farm's ecological goals and the behaviour of the workforce reflects a shared understanding of what the enterprise stands for.

Natural Resource Utilization

Tanshikar Spice Farm is situated in Netravali, a region known for its rich biodiversity, forest cover, and fresh water sources. The enterprise makes strategic use of its natural surroundings, both for agricultural purposes and to enhance its tourism

experience. The integration of farming with ecotourism allows for optimal, yet mindful, utilization of natural resources.

a) Integration of Organic Agriculture and Ecotourism: The farm's primary agricultural activity involves the cultivation of a variety of spices, including cardamom, black pepper, vanilla, turmeric, cinnamon, and nutmeg. These crops are grown under the canopy of native trees, ensuring a shade-grown environment that helps conserve soil moisture, reduces erosion, and creates a cooler microclimate. This method not only supports ecological balance but also enhances the visitor experience, as guests are immersed in a lush, forest-like plantation.

The production of spices is interspersed with the cultivation of regular food crops and fruits such as coconuts, betel nuts, papayas, mangoes, pineapples, and bananas. This mixed cropping approach ensures diversified farm output, supports food security, and enhances the ecological resilience of the plantation system by avoiding monoculture practices. Importantly, all farming is conducted using organic methods. Chemical fertilizers and pesticides are strictly avoided. Instead, farm waste is composted and reused as manure, contributing to improved soil fertility and reducing dependency on external inputs. These practices help maintain soil health over the long term, demonstrating a closed-loop approach to resource management.

b) Sustainable Water Management: A key natural asset utilized on the farm is a natural spring, which supplies fresh water to a spring-fed pool on the premises. This pool serves both utilitarian and recreational functions. It provides a cooling, chemical-free bathing experience for guests and symbolizes the farm's reliance on clean, renewable water sources rather than mechanically filtered or chlorinated alternatives.

c) Heritage Architecture and Thermal Efficiency: The farm's 250-year-old mud house is a prominent example of sustainable architecture that utilizes indigenous building materials and traditional construction knowledge. With walls measuring nearly three feet in thickness, the house maintains thermal equilibrium—absorbing external heat during the day while keeping the interiors cool, and conversely retaining warmth during colder months. This passive temperature regulation minimizes the need for artificial cooling or heating systems. The mud flooring inside the house provides a natural

cushioning effect, which reduces the incidence of breakage of crockery and other items.

d) **Preservation of Biodiversity and Educational Tourism:** The surrounding forested area, rich in birdlife, butterflies, and medicinal plants, is treated as an educational resource rather than a mere backdrop. Guests are offered guided walks through the plantation and adjacent forest trails, during which they are introduced to the local biodiversity and traditional knowledge systems related to the use of various plants.

In line with its conservation ethic, the farm enforces a strict no-noise policy and does not permit disruptive tourist activities such as loud music or parties. These measures ensure that the local fauna is not disturbed and the ecological balance remains intact.

e) **Value-Added Processing of Farm Produce:** In addition to primary agriculture, the farm has established an in-house manufacturing unit that processes raw produce into a variety of value-added products. This initiative enhances resource efficiency and supports economic sustainability.

- **Nutmeg:** The soft outer covering of nutmeg seeds is converted into spiced candies, which are sold to tourists and distributed to local markets.
- **Jackfruits and Raw Bananas:** These are used to manufacture papads and chips, adding variety to the farm's product offerings.
- **Mangoes, Papayas and Pineapples:** These fruits are processed into jams and preserves using traditional recipes.
- **Bee Cultivation (Apiculture):** The farm also engages in beekeeping, producing high-quality organic honey. This product is in strong demand and exemplifies the farm's commitment to leveraging ecosystem services sustainably.

Strategic Initiatives and Innovations

Tanshikar Spice Farm has adopted a series of strategic initiatives over the years that align with both sustainability and experiential tourism. These initiatives are rooted in local knowledge systems, founder experience, and evolving market expectations. The intent has been to offer differentiated services while retaining the authenticity of place.

a) One key strategic decision has been to integrate spice farming with tourism, thus diversifying the farm's revenue streams. The farm is not solely dependent on agricultural output; instead, it positions itself as an eco-agri-tourism destination where guests are exposed to the processes behind spice cultivation, organic farming methods, and sustainable living practices.

b) Another initiative has been the development of in-house guided experiences. The founder himself often conducts educational tours, explaining the biology and utility of spices, the role of beneficial insects, composting processes, and traditional building techniques. This model fosters learning-based tourism and creates direct engagement between the entrepreneur and visitors, thereby strengthening guest involvement and interest.

c) The adaptive reuse of the 250-year-old mud house is both a strategic and symbolic move. Apart from serving as accommodation, the structure is used to demonstrate thermodynamic efficiency and architectural resilience, such as the thickness of walls for thermal insulation and the shock-absorbing nature of mud flooring. This acts as a practical illustration of vernacular sustainability, which appeals to environmentally-conscious tourists and student groups.

d) In terms of managing visitor profiles, the farm has introduced a screening mechanism during the booking process, especially for direct phone reservations. This allows the team to assess the intent and behaviour expectations of guests. The policy of restricting parties, loud music, and alcohol consumption in common areas is enforced to preserve the tranquillity of the setting and maintain harmony with the natural environment.

e) On the innovation front, the farm has also developed soft adventure activities, such as treks to nearby waterfalls, plantation trails, and minimal-impact rope courses. These are offered without altering the forest ecosystem and often use temporary, non-invasive installations. Such activities are designed to be physically engaging while still rooted in nature appreciation.

f) The enterprise places emphasis on organic and inclusive growth. There is no expansion for the sake of scale; rather, growth is seen as a by-product of consistent

quality and word-of-mouth referrals. Competition is not viewed as a threat but as a catalyst for quality improvement and collective promotion of the region. Additional players in the area could attract a broader tourist base to Netravali, which in turn may benefit all stakeholders (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, 2.5.2021).

Sustainable Resource Management Practices

The farm positions itself as a near zero-waste entity, implementing strategies that address both organic and inorganic waste streams generated through its agro-tourism and farming activities.

A core aspect of its sustainability framework is the segregation and recycling of waste at the source. All wet waste, primarily comprising kitchen scraps and agricultural residue, is directed towards composting units. This organic matter is systematically processed and reused as manure across the spice plantation, closing the nutrient loop and reducing dependence on external fertilizers.

Dry waste, which includes biodegradable materials from farming and household use, is sent to a shredding unit where it is processed further. These materials, once shredded, are often either used in composting or integrated into other farm operations such as mulching. This ensures that minimal waste exits the farm premises without utility.

The farm also capitalizes on residual biomass from local agricultural products. Fibres from supari (areca nut) and coconuts are repurposed to manufacture coir ropes, which are then used within the farm for various applications, including plant tying, fencing, or packaging. These ropes are also sold as value-added products, contributing to the farm's ancillary income. In addition, barks of betel nut trees are fashioned into organic plates and cups. These are not only used internally to serve food and refreshments to guests—thus reducing reliance on single-use plastics or disposables—but are also packaged and sold in niche eco-conscious markets, where they fetch premium prices due to their biodegradability and rustic appeal.

These practices reflect an embedded philosophy of low-impact operations and resource circularity, where nothing is treated as waste unless it has no further function. The farm's self-imposed standards on waste minimization also extend to guest

interactions. Visitors are sensitized to the farm's sustainability ethos and are encouraged to respect these systems during their stay. The zero-waste approach, therefore, is not limited to a set of technical processes but is integrated into the daily functioning and guest experience at Tanshikar Spice Farm. It contributes to cost savings, environmental preservation, and strengthens the brand's identity as a responsible, ecologically aligned tourism provider.

Community Engagement Programs

Tanshikar Spice Farm demonstrates a consistent commitment to community engagement through its inclusive employment model and interactive tourism experiences. A large proportion of the workforce employed at the farm is drawn from nearby villages, offering livelihood opportunities to the local population. Beyond employment, the farm facilitates guided tours and workshops where community members participate as cultural informants, traditional cooks, or local artisans.

During educational farm visits, guests are often introduced to traditional farming methods, local culinary practices, and indigenous flora, contributing to cultural preservation and awareness. These activities also function as informal platforms for intergenerational knowledge transfer, especially when younger community members assist or observe these sessions.

Navigating Operational Realities in an Eco-Sensitive Environment

Operating within the ecologically sensitive zone of Netravali, Tanshikar Spice Farm has adopted various strategies to ensure environmental compliance while sustaining its core operations. Infrastructure development is consciously minimal; buildings are constructed using locally sourced, low-impact materials such as mud, laterite, and wood. The use of permanent concrete structures is strictly avoided beyond permissible boundaries, in keeping with zoning regulations and ecological guidelines.

Tourist activities are curated to maintain a low ecological footprint. Experiences such as trekking and waterfall visits are conducted with prior briefings that educate guests on local biodiversity, permissible behaviours, and the importance of conservation. Visitors are discouraged from bringing non-biodegradable items or

engaging in noise-intensive activities. The surrounding forest ecosystem and proximity to wildlife corridors require the enterprise to remain vigilant, particularly during seasons when the risk of human-wildlife interaction is elevated. Operational planning, therefore, includes contingencies for natural disruptions as well as conservation priorities.

In addition to environmental considerations, Tanshikar Spice Farm also grapples with the operational realities typical of small-scale, family-run enterprises. The hands-on nature of the work demands the continuous presence of both proprietors—Chinmay and Gauri Tanshikar—throughout the year. Their deep involvement in the daily functioning of the business allows for authenticity and consistency but has also contributed to significant physical and emotional strain. The lack of a formal team structure often translates into an absence of breaks, leading to fatigue and burnout. In response, the couple has begun exploring the possibility of taking a scheduled break during the monsoon months (June or July), when tourist footfall is minimal, to recuperate and maintain long-term sustainability in their roles.

Another context-specific operational concern is the issue of succession planning, shaped by regional socio-cultural norms. In many parts of India, including Goa, inheritance of land-based enterprises traditionally follows a patrilineal model. With two daughters who may eventually settle elsewhere post-marriage, the farm faces a potential gap in intergenerational transfer. This has led the couple to consider alternative succession models, such as professional management, cooperative frameworks, or training trusted community members to assume future leadership roles. The absence of a clear successor raises complex questions about legacy, continuity, and the future identity of the farm.



Fig 4.57: Family photograph of Gauri and Chinmay Tanshikar
Source: <https://tanshikarspicefarm.com/> (14.4.2025)

Together, these challenges highlight the nuanced interplay between environmental stewardship, operational resilience, and socio-cultural dynamics. Tanshikar Spice Farm's efforts to navigate these realities underscore the broader complexities of sustaining small-scale eco-agro tourism ventures in ecologically and culturally sensitive regions.

Government Policies and External Pressures

Tanshikar Spice Farm operates under a regulatory framework that includes agricultural zoning laws, eco-tourism guidelines, and forest department restrictions. While these frameworks are designed to support sustainable operations, stakeholders sometimes experience ambiguity or delays in procedural approvals, particularly when policies lack clarity in differentiating agro-tourism from commercial tourism ventures.

The farm occasionally contends with external expectations from local political representatives or administrative officials, who may advocate for broader infrastructure developments in the region that may not align with Tanshikar's low-impact approach. Nonetheless, the management remains engaged in maintaining compliance and constructive dialogue with authorities when necessary, aiming to balance growth with ecological responsibility.

Seasonal Fluctuations in Tourism Demand

Tourism at Tanshikar Spice Farm follows a distinctly seasonal pattern, with peak visitation typically occurring between October and March, coinciding with the cooler months and major holiday seasons. During monsoons and the height of summer, tourist inflow declines significantly. These off-peak periods are strategically used for farm maintenance, upskilling staff, and updating infrastructure.

To cope with demand variability, the farm relies on its agricultural output for financial sustenance, thereby reducing over-reliance on tourism revenue. Additionally, small-group tours and educational visits from schools and colleges during the shoulder months provide a degree of continuity in guest engagement. The dual model of tourism and farming allows the farm to maintain financial and operational stability across seasons.

Regulatory and Bureaucratic Issues

While Tanshikar Spice Farm functions primarily as an agricultural enterprise, the integration of limited tourism services has occasionally necessitated engagement with bureaucratic procedures across various departments, including agriculture, tourism, and environment. However, the ambiguity in the classification of hybrid models such as eco-agro tourism has presented challenges. For instance, the lack of clear identification and policy provisions for agro-ecotourism units has made it difficult for such enterprises to access government schemes or apply for loans under a well-defined category.

Despite these potential obstacles, Tanshikar has remained largely shielded from bureaucratic interference, primarily because it has not availed of any government financial assistance or subsidies. This independence has allowed the enterprise to maintain operational autonomy and flexibility. Nonetheless, there remain concerns about future policy changes, particularly regarding taxation. The farm focuses on the cultivation of exotic spices, such as vanilla, nutmeg, and cardamom—crops that are not only high in market value but also relatively rare in the regional agricultural landscape. Any future imposition of taxes or levies on the sale of such niche produce may directly affect the enterprise's profitability and cost structure.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

As a nature-based enterprise, Tanshikar Spice Farm is increasingly experiencing the consequences of climate variability and environmental degradation. Shifts in seasonal patterns—marked by erratic rainfall, prolonged dry spells, and unseasonal downpours—have started to disrupt traditional farming cycles. These climatic changes directly affect the timing and yield of spice harvests, thereby influencing both income consistency and the availability of farm-fresh produce for visitor experiences and culinary demonstrations.

A notable instance occurred in 2021, when the farm experienced excessive rainfall that led to the complete loss of its cardamom crop. As a ground-level creeper, cardamom is particularly vulnerable to waterlogging and fungal infections during such

conditions. This unexpected crop failure posed a significant economic risk. However, the farm's strategy of cultivating a diverse range of spices—such as vanilla and black pepper, which are better adapted to high rainfall conditions—played a crucial role in mitigating losses. The success of these companion crops during adverse weather helped stabilize farm revenues and highlighted the importance of biodiversity in building agricultural resilience.

In response to ongoing climatic challenges, the farm has adopted several adaptive farming practices. These include intercropping to optimize land use, organic soil conditioning to improve moisture retention and fertility, and mulching to prevent erosion and regulate soil temperature. Observations of increased pest incidences and shifting microclimatic zones have further reinforced the need for sustainable agricultural inputs and ecosystem-based approaches. Also, climate education has become an integral part of the farm's visitor engagement. Tours and experiential sessions now include discussions on climate adaptation and resilience strategies, thereby fostering environmental awareness among tourists.

Chapter 5

Individual Case Analysis and findings

This chapter aims to analyse the five cases using the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) framework. Each case will be tested and studied through the variables under the SLFT framework which will make it clearer as to how the application of SLFT impacts local livelihoods, environmental preservation, and social development in each case. At the end of each case analysis, there shall be a discussion. The analysis is followed by case findings.

In our study we will adapt SLFT to analyze peripheral tourism enterprises (PTEs) as the unit of analysis.

5.1 INDIVIDUAL CASE ANALYSIS

5.1.1 Nature's Nest

1.Resources

a. Natural Resource - Natural resources refer to the surrounding environment and ecosystems, which play a critical role in differentiating and enriching tourism activities. In the case of Nature's Nest in Mollem, Goa, several natural resources contribute significantly to the PTEs tourism offerings:

Western Ghats Biodiversity: Nature's Nest is strategically located within the Western Ghats, a biodiversity hotspot (Shen et al., 2008). The PTE capitalizes on this unique setting to offer nature-based experiences, including treks, bird-watching, and wildlife observation. The lush greenery, dense forests, and diverse flora and fauna contribute to the PTE's appeal to eco-conscious tourists seeking a connection with nature.

Sacred Groves: The presence of sacred groves, which are preserved areas of forests with religious significance (Bunting et al, 2013), enhances the PTE's natural assets. These groves provide guests with opportunities to learn about local cultural practices, rituals, and the ecological importance of preserving such spaces.

Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Tambdi Surla Temple: The proximity to the wildlife sanctuary allows Nature's Nest to offer guided treks and nature trails to visitors, showcasing the rich biodiversity of the region (Pawar & Salgaonkar, 2023). The

sanctuary's diverse range of wildlife, including endemic species, provides a unique attraction for wildlife enthusiasts. Presence of the historic, monolith Tambdi Surla temple of basalt built by the Kadamba Yadav dynasty in the 12th century (GTDC, 2023) is another heritage attraction that tourists' throng to during their stay at Nature's Nest.

Natural Landscapes: The cascading waterfalls, serene rivers, and natural water bodies within the Western Ghats contribute to the PTE's natural aesthetics. Visitors can engage in activities like waterfall treks and river walks, creating memorable experiences that highlight the beauty of the natural landscapes.

Biodiversity Conservation: The PTEs commitment to sustainable practices, such as responsible waste management, organic mixed plantation, other conservation project etc. further enhances its natural assets. By showcasing these practices to visitors, Nature's Nest emphasizes the importance of preserving natural resources for future generations.

Eco-Friendly Practices: The PTEs focus on eco-friendly practices, including use of renewable energy sources and conservation of water resources, aligns with the concept of natural resource. These practices not only reduce the farm's ecological footprint but also showcase the value of responsible tourism to guests.

b. Physical Resource - Nature's Nest possesses a range of physical resources essential to its operations. These assets are crucial in providing an attractive and comfortable environment for tourists, enhancing their overall experience. These include:

Mud-lined Cottages: The establishment features 10 well-designed, village-styled mud-lined cottages. These cottages provide tourists with a rustic and authentic experience, allowing them to connect with the local culture and environment.

Kokum Tree' Restaurant: The on-site restaurant, named 'Kokum Tree,' provides tourists with a space to indulge in authentic local cuisine. This physical asset offers an experience of authentic local cuisine surrounded by the natural beauty of the Western Ghats, enhancing the overall ambiance for guests.

Freshwater Swimming Pool: The availability of a freshwater swimming pool is a significant physical resource. This amenity not only offers relaxation and leisure to guests but also aligns with the eco-friendly practices of the resort by using non-chlorinated water.

Adventure Activity Equipment: Nature's Nest provides adventure activities such as rappelling, zip-lining, and wall climbing. The presence of specialized equipment for

these activities enhances the adventurous aspect of the experience, attracting thrill-seeking tourists.

Jeeps: The provision of jeeps for wildlife safaris and treks is a crucial physical asset that allows tourists to explore the natural landscapes of Mollem with convenience and safety.

c. Human Resource - Human resource viz - The founders, management team, and staff members contribute their knowledge, skills, and expertise to create a memorable and fulfilling experience for tourists.

Founders' Expertise: The founders of Nature's Nest viz Pankaj Lad and Ramesh Zharmekar, bring deep insights into ecotourism and sustainable practices. Their background in environmental conservation, combined with their commitment to responsible tourism, shapes the core values and operational strategies of the resort.

Staff Members: The resort employs a team of environmentalists, guides, and staff members who are well-versed in local flora, fauna, and cultural heritage. These individuals play a crucial role in guiding nature treks, bird-watching activities, and other eco-friendly experiences.

Specialization in Birding and Herping: Nature's Nest has capitalized on the expertise of specialized guides who offer unique activities like birding and herping (reptile spotting). These guides possess in-depth knowledge of the local biodiversity, enabling them to create enriching experiences for tourists.

Memorable Experiences: The staff's dedication and their ability to engage guests through storytelling, nature interpretation, and interactive activities contributes to positive guest reviews and repeat visits.

Positive Online Presence: The human resource's role extends to managing the PTEs online presence. By responding to guest reviews, sharing informative content, and showcasing the resort's commitment to sustainability, the staff enhances the resort's reputation.

Customer Satisfaction and Repeat Business: The expertise of the staff and their personalized approach to guest interactions contribute to high levels of customer satisfaction. Satisfied guests are more likely to return and recommend Nature's Nest to others.

d. Social Resource - The resort's strong relationships with local communities, NGOs, and governmental bodies contribute to its sustainable tourism practices and positive impact on the region.

Community Engagement: Nature's Nest actively engages with the local community, employing residents in various roles and involving them in activities such as guided tours, cultural interactions, and handicraft displays. This engagement fosters a sense of ownership and pride among the villagers.

Partnerships with NGOs: Collaborative partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specializing in environmental conservation and sustainable development enhance Nature's Nest's initiatives. These partnerships enable the resort to tap into expertise, share knowledge, and implement responsible tourism practices.

Governmental Support: Nature's Nest's collaboration with governmental bodies, such as the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), highlights its alignment with broader tourism development goals. This collaboration not only provides the resort with exposure but also demonstrates its commitment to regulatory compliance.

Tourism Enterprises: The PTEs engagement with other tourism enterprises in the region, including tour operators and travel agencies, enhances its market reach and diversifies its customer base. A case in example here is the tie-up with "India Untamed," a group specializing in animal and birding trails across India (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021). Cross-promotion and joint efforts contribute to attracting a wider range of tourists.

Stakeholder Relationships: Nature's Nest values its relationships with suppliers, customers, and local communities. These relationships are built on trust, reciprocity, and shared benefits, contributing to the resort's reputation and word-of-mouth publicity.

Community Upliftment: Through its commitment to responsible tourism, Nature's Nest uplifts the local community by providing employment, skill development, and economic opportunities. This contributes to the overall well-being and sustainable growth of the community.

e. Financial Resource - The PTEs effective management of financial resources supports its commitment to responsible tourism practices and contributes to its long-term success.

Investment in Infrastructure: Source of funding was done through bootstrapping (Abreu et al., 2019; Kontogeorgopoulos & Kostopoulos, 2018). The promoter initially invested an amount of ₹9000 and borrowed resource worth ₹20,000, to commence the project (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021). Nature's Nest strategically allocated financial resources to develop and maintain its eco-friendly

infrastructure, including eco-cottages, waste management systems, and renewable energy installations. These investments enhance the resort's appeal to environmentally conscious tourists. However, finances have remained a constant source of challenge to the promoter (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021).

Marketing and Promotion: Adequate financial resource is directed towards marketing and promotion efforts to reach a wider audience. This includes digital marketing campaigns, participation in travel fairs, and collaborations with tour operators, which contribute to the PTEs visibility and customer base (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021).

Human Resource Development: Financial resources are allocated for training and capacity building of staff, ensuring a high level of service quality and guest satisfaction. Well-trained personnel contribute to positive guest experiences and repeat visits, supporting revenue generation.

Community Initiatives: Nature's Nest invests in community development initiatives, such as training local residents for employment opportunities and facilitating skill development workshops. These initiatives not only contribute to the community's well-being but also enhance the resort's reputation.

Research and Innovation: Financial resources are dedicated to research and innovation in sustainable practices. This includes experimenting with eco-friendly technologies, implementing waste reduction strategies, and staying updated on industry trends to maintain a competitive edge.

Sustainable Investments: Nature's Nest makes conscious financial choices aligned with its commitment to sustainability. These include investments in renewable energy sources, waste management solutions, otter conservation project and other environmentally friendly technologies.

2. Institutional Arrangements:

a. Central Government - The central government plays a significant role in shaping the institutional arrangements within which Nature's Nest operates. This includes policies, regulations, and initiatives that impact the resort's operations and broader tourism development in the region. Forest Conservation Act (1980); National Forest Policy (1988); National Ecotourism Policy (2004); National Wildlife Action Plan :2017-

2031 (2019); Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill (2023), set the guidelines for biodiversity protection and responsible tourism practices.

Environmental Regulations: Government regulations on environmental protection and conservation directly affect Nature's Nest due to its location within a biodiversity hotspot. Compliance with these regulations is crucial to maintain the resort's legitimacy and reputation as an environmentally responsible establishment.

b. Tourism Enterprises - Nature's Nest collaborates with other tourism enterprises within the area to collectively contribute to sustainable tourism development.

Local Tourism Businesses: Collaboration with tourism businesses (Oyo, Expedia, and Trivago), local tour operators and transportation providers, enables Nature's Nest to offer comprehensive packages to visitors. These collaborations support local economic growth and enhance the overall tourist experience.

c. Local Community - The local community's involvement and support are integral to the success of Nature's Nest. The institutional interactions include –

Employment Opportunities: Nature's Nest provides employment opportunities to local residents, thereby contributing to local livelihoods and economic development. Yet, the difficulty of keeping locally sourced people at Nature's Nest remains a persistent and bothersome concern, given that community members frequently go on vacations at the slightest opportunity (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021).

Community Engagement: Regular interactions between Nature's Nest and the local community help foster positive relationships. This collaboration leads to shared goals and the co-creation of initiatives that benefit both parties. The market intermediary model of a social enterprise (Weppen and Cochrane, 2012) is practiced, wherein the resort serves as a conduit to sell products such as food items and handicrafts made by locals to tourists.

d. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) - NGOs play a vital role in supporting Nature's Nest's commitment to sustainability and community development.

Collaboration for Conservation: Nature's Nest collaborates with environmental NGOs to contribute to conservation efforts and raise awareness about biodiversity and environmental issues.

Skill Development and Training: Nature's Nest along with these NGOs provide training and capacity-building programs for local residents, enhancing their employability in the tourism sector and supporting sustainable community development.

The institutional arrangement, comprising the central government, tourism

enterprises, local community, and non-governmental organizations (Mikulcak, 2015), creates an environment that shapes Nature's Nest's operations, sustainability practices, and community engagement.

3. Vulnerability Context:

a. Shock - Nature's Nest is vulnerable to various shocks that can impact its operations and sustainability, viz -

Natural Disasters: The resort's location within a biodiversity hotspot and existence of protected area exposes it to natural disasters such as storms, floods, and landslides. These events can disrupt operations, damage infrastructure, and require costly repairs.

Pandemic Outbreaks: Global events like pandemics can significantly affect tourism demand. The COVID-19 pandemic, for example, led to travel restrictions and reduced tourist arrivals, impacting revenue and necessitating adaptations to health and safety protocols.

b. Seasonality - The seasonal nature of tourism in Mollem affects the vulnerability context of Nature's Nest.

Monsoon Season: The monsoon season can lead to reduced tourist visits due to unfavourable weather conditions. This affects revenue generation during these months and requires strategies to mitigate the impact; such as inviting students of biology and environmental studies, undertaking maintenance and repair work of the cottages at the resort etc. during the lean season (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021)

Peak Tourist Season: High tourist arrivals during peak seasons can strain local resources and infrastructure. Nature's Nest needs to manage resource use and visitor experiences efficiently.

c. Trends - Environmental and tourism trends contribute to the vulnerability context of Nature's Nest.

Eco-Friendly Tourism: The growing trend of eco-friendly and sustainable tourism creates opportunities for Nature's Nest. However, failure to align with these trends can lead to reputational risks and decreased demand. The adoption of air conditioning units within the cottages, establishment of a swimming facility catering to leisure-oriented tourists, and the transition from a stringent 'no alcohol policy' to a more permissive stance that permits visitors to carry their own drinks, collectively exemplify

yielding to the preferences and requirements of tourists and commercial interests. These measures have had an adverse impact on the standing of Nature's Nest in the eyes of environmental advocates.

d. Institutional Policies - Institutional policies and regulations impact the vulnerability context of Nature's Nest.

Protected Area Regulations: Nature's Nest operates within a biodiversity hotspot having protected areas (sacred groves) in the vicinity, making it subject to stringent regulations to ensure environmental preservation. Non-compliance can result in legal and reputational risks.

Tourism Policies: The central government's tourism policies influence the overall direction of the tourism industry. Changes in tourism policies can affect Nature's Nest's ability to attract visitors and maintain sustainability. Favourable policies can promote growth, while unfavourable policies can create challenges. Example: in June 2020 the Government of Goa intended implementing three projects viz - double tracking of railway line, Tamnar power project (Goa News, 2022) and national highway expansion – passing through the Mollem National Park and the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary (Herald, 2021). This would seriously jeopardize tourism activities at Nature's Nest. Active participation by the promoter of Nature's Nest and many other environmentalists and NGOs in the 'Save Mollem Campaign' helped reverse this decision (Pankaj Lad, personal communication, February 5, 2021).

Though this power project is under abeyance, revival of it looms large and is a cause of constant concern.

4. Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes:

Strategies -

a. Tourism-related Activity –

Ecotourism Offerings: Nature's Nest employs several livelihood strategies related to its ecotourism offerings.

Nature Walks and Guided Tours: Offering guided nature walks and tours within the protected area provides direct employment for local guides and naturalists. This enhances visitor experiences and generates revenue.

Wildlife Photography Workshops: Organizing workshops on wildlife photography capitalizes on the rich biodiversity of the region. This creates an additional revenue stream and provides opportunities for local photographers to showcase their skills.

Hospitality Services: Nature's Nest relies on hospitality services to support its livelihood strategies.

Accommodation Services: Providing comfortable and eco-friendly accommodation attracts tourists to stay at Nature's Nest. This generates revenue and provides employment for housekeeping and maintenance staff.

Local Cuisine Offerings: Serving locally sourced and traditional cuisine enhances the cultural experience for guests. This creates demand for local produce and supports local farmers and food suppliers.

b. Non-tourism-related Activity -

Agroforestry and Agriculture: Nature's Nest engages in non-tourism-related activities to diversify livelihood sources.

Agroforestry Plantations: Cultivating native plant species for agroforestry contributes to biodiversity conservation. It also provides opportunities for local farmers to engage in sustainable agriculture practices through an in-house spice and medicinal plants plantation unit.

Craft and Souvenir Sales: Promoting local handicrafts and souvenirs contributes to livelihood diversification. Partnering with local artisans to create handicrafts and souvenirs gives them a platform to showcase their skills. This generates income and preserves traditional crafts.

Outcomes

a. Economic Outcomes -

Income Generation: The various tourism-related and non-tourism-related activities create employment and income opportunities for local residents, contributing to economic well-being.

Collaborating with local suppliers for food, products, and services stimulates the local economy and supports small businesses.

b. Social Outcomes - The livelihood strategies of Nature's Nest led to positive social outcomes.

Skill Development: Training local guides, naturalists, and artisans enhances their skills and knowledge, improving their employability and self-reliance.

Community Engagement: Collaborating with local communities for farming and craft initiatives strengthens community bonds and encourages collective efforts.

c. Environmental Outcomes - Nature's Nest's livelihood strategies have positive

impacts on the environment.

Biodiversity Conservation: Promoting ecotourism and sustainable land use practices contribute to the conservation of local biodiversity. The Otter conservation project started by Nature's Nest is a case in example here.

Awareness and Education: Conducting nature walks and workshops raises environmental awareness among visitors, fostering a sense of responsibility for nature conservation.

d. Institutional Outcomes -

Nature's Nest fosters strong relationships with the local community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental bodies. These partnerships contribute to community development, skill enhancement, and sustainable practices. Nature's Nest also collaborates with various tourism enterprises, tour operators, and travel agencies to enhance its market reach and diversify its customer base. These collaborations strengthen stakeholder relationships and contribute to the resort's reputation and word-of-mouth publicity.

SUMMARIZED ANALYSIS OF NATURE'S NEST

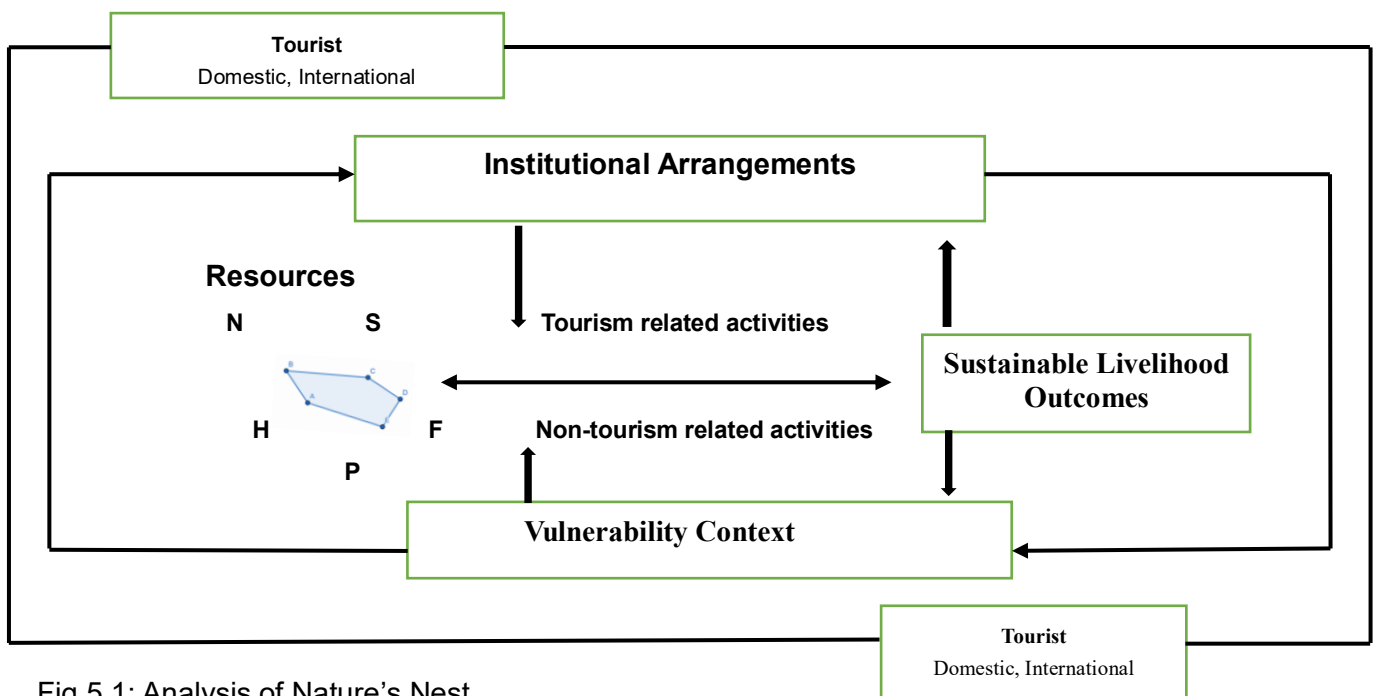


Fig 5.1: Analysis of Nature's Nest

Source: Adapted from (DFID,1999; Shen et al., 2008) and applied to the case by researcher.

The SLFT pentagon for Nature's Nest is skewed positively towards natural, human, and social resources, these are continually tested by vulnerability factors and institutional dynamics. Nature's Nest is located in the biodiverse Western Ghats, surrounded by lush forests, sacred groves, and habitats rich in birdlife and otters—its key natural resources. These support activities like nature walks and wildlife photography, add to its offerings. However, these resources are vulnerable to external shocks such as natural disasters (storms, landslides, floods) and human-induced threats like proposed infrastructure projects. The human resource is led by a knowledgeable promoter with academic expertise and deep knowledge of Mollem's biodiversity, playing a key role in strategy and environmental advocacy. Trained local staff support operations across guiding, hospitality, and maintenance, with ongoing skill development in eco-tourism and wildlife education to ensure enriching visitor experiences. The social resource is maintained by strong community ties through collaboration in farming, agroforestry, and crafts, gaining access to local knowledge and cultural authenticity. While the community supports the supply chain and heritage preservation, limited engagement from some locals poses challenges to expanding shared responsibility in sustainable tourism. However, operating within a protected area imposes several regulatory constraints on land use, infrastructure expansion, and tourist activity. Institutional risks also stem from government-backed development plans—such as the proposed Tamnar Power Project, double railway tracking, and highway expansion—posing existential threats to Nature's Nest and its ecological base. While some of these were put on hold due to widespread protests and legal advocacy, the possibility of revival remains a looming concern. These institutional hurdles complicate long-term planning and necessitate constant engagement with state mechanisms and environmental networks. Also, The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated how external health shocks can bring tourism to a complete standstill, leading to revenue loss and operational disruption. Moreover, the resort's dependence on seasonal tourism—with significant dips during the monsoon months—affects income predictability. While Nature's Nest has mitigated some of this impact by hosting student groups and carrying out maintenance work during lean periods, the cyclical nature of tourism remains a persistent vulnerability. In contrast, the peak season, although economically beneficial, requires strategic resource allocation to avoid overuse and ecological strain.

Thus, the sustainability of the enterprise depends on its ability to leverage its resources adaptively, resist institutional pressures, and buffer against external shocks.

Table 5.1: Overview of Nature's Nest's SLFT Analysis

SLFT Dimension	Details
Core Resources	- Natural: Forest ecosystem, biodiversity, sacred groves, otters - Human: Promoter's expertise, trained guides, support staff - Social: Local community ties, cultural capital
Institutional Challenges	- Stringent eco-regulations due to protected area status - Reluctance among some locals to participate actively
Vulnerability Context	- Shocks: Natural disasters (storms, floods), COVID-19 pandemic - Seasonality: Monsoon-induced drop in tourism; peak season overuse - Trends: Balancing eco-tourism with tourist expectations (e.g., AC, swimming pool, alcohol policy) - Institutional: Government proposals: Tamnar Power Project, railway and highway expansion
Livelihood Strategies	- Tourism-related: Nature-based tourism, birdwatching tours, guided nature walks, biodiversity education, otter conservation experiences - Non-tourism: Agroforestry, farming, local crafts, community engagement in cultural preservation
Outcomes	- Economic: Steady income from eco-tourism, local employment generation, reduced dependence on external markets - Social: Strengthened local networks, community-based conservation, partial community participation - Environmental: Habitat protection, biodiversity awareness, otter conservation, vulnerable to infrastructural threats and climate events - Institutional: Strong promoter leadership and local guide network; limited collective ownership; active advocacy (e.g., Save Mollem Campaign)

Source: Researcher's own contribution

5.1.2 Analysis of Aangan

1. Resources

a. Natural Resource: Natural surroundings, accessibility to two waterfalls - 'Sawri' and 'Mainapi', and the natural flora and fauna of the place form an integral part of Aangan.

b. Physical Resource: The infrastructures, superstructures, and manmade structures which require human interventions to be produced or processed comprise the physical asset. Initially, five homestays were identified. The tourists were expected to stay with the villagers. Only toilet facilities and room beds were provided. The participation in building physical assets on a sustained basis was not done at the site.

c. Human Resource: The villagers are the human assets for the project. Most villagers are farmers. Hence, strawberry cultivation was just an extension of their Agri skills. The villagers had to be trained in providing food and beverage services,

housekeeping and stewarding. In-depth knowledge of the topography of the place; knowledge of plant and animal life were the plus points.

d. Social Resource: The project was cooperative, with the active participation of the villagers. In the initial phase, there was constant monitoring by the NGOs. As a result, there was harmony among the villagers, and doubts, if any, were clarified by the NGO authorities. However, later political polarization at the local level led to a mild disruption of tourism activity.

e. Financial Resource: The financial asset includes the provision of finance for the homestay facility. MSFG invested seven lakhs as an initial contribution (P. Rangnekar, personal communication, 13th September 2021). The formation of the cooperative society and a bank account under this society ensured there were funds to take care of the repair and maintenance of the homestay. The NGO managed all the operational and managerial functions.

The social and physical assets at Aangan call for community participation in decision-making. The project's capacity assessment was carried out by the NGO (P. Rangnekar, personal communication, 13th September 2021).

2. Institutional Arrangements

Institutional arrangements describe the role of the government, tourism enterprises, communities and NGOs in the functioning of the unit.

a. Central Government: The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, at the national level, plans for tourism for the whole country and provides funding for tourism projects to the state.

State Government: Goa Tourism Board (GTB), the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), and the Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Government of Goa look after the tourism interests at the local level (Gore, 2019; Gore et al., 2023). They follow the policies of the central government at the state level.

The state government is responsible for providing infrastructure facilities such as roads, electricity, and water supply to the village. In addition, the state government provides free seedlings to the villagers and monthly financial assistance/subsidies to the youth (under the backward class category) under 'Atal Gram Yojana'. This has, however, discouraged the villagers entrepreneurship and competitive spirit (P. Rangnekar, personal communication, 13th September 2021).

Aangan also encountered operational difficulties due to ambiguities in policy and regulatory frameworks. Its location within the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary necessitated ongoing coordination with the Forest Department to obtain approvals for activities such as trekking and birdwatching trails. Besides, while tribal protection laws played a key role in preserving Velip identity, they were at times seen as restricting cultural exchange—central to Aangan’s tourism model. Although early support from the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa offered vital funding, sustained institutional backing for training, capacity building, innovation, and policy alignment was limited.

b. Tourism Enterprises: Mrugaya Expeditions is a tour company based out of Goa that conducts tours with partner travel agencies from Bangalore (Mrugaya Xpeditions, 2022). In addition, they promote Aangan through the website and social media.

c. Local Community: The project runs through community participation and cooperative society. Five homestays and five self-help groups (SHGs) participate actively in the project.

d. Non-Government Organization (NGO): Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG) initially financed the project with an investment of 7 lacs to rehabilitate villagers who lost their income once mining stopped in 2012. Reputed environmentalists from Goa were approached to assist in starting the project. Mr. Parag Rangnekar, the state coordinator for Goa of the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN), was instrumental in forming by-laws and policies for forming a tourism cooperative society. At the time, the state government lacked a formal framework to classify or accommodate community-based tourism initiatives operating in the peripheral regions of Goa. The local community shows resilience and adaptability to new developments.

3. Vulnerability

a. Shock: The villagers in the peripheral area were unaffected by the Covid-19 infections. However, the pandemic led to a complete stoppage of tourism activity and a decline in the villagers’ income.

b. Seasonality: The project is highly dependent on seasonal tourism demand, leading to fluctuations in income and employment opportunities for local communities. Tourism is the secondary source of income for the villagers. Agriculture is the primary one.

c. Trends: Tourism market trends, i.e., people shifting from mass tourism to alternative tourism, would benefit this project.

d. Institutional Policies: The project is affected by the policies of the state government and the forest department. Formal rules, which consist of laws, rules and policies, have a bearing on this project. Also, since the village falls under the 'Forest Reserve', the project is vulnerable to policy changes by the government. The villagers protect their forests as the forest has sacred groves and many old beliefs attached to them. The community is vulnerable to policy changes and decisions made by the government.

The community is also vulnerable to wrong decisions made them. Aangan's strawberry cultivation, while economically promising, revealed vulnerability arising from dependence on fluctuating tourist inflows. The shift from a stable vendor tie-up to unpredictable direct sales to tourists disrupted supply chains. The lack of storage facilities or a fallback market led to instances of post-harvest loss (fruits rotting) when tourist arrivals declined. This underscores the community's exposure to external shocks, including market instability and the absence of coordinated supply strategies.

4. Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes

Strategies

a. Tourism related activity: The tourism activities at Aangan include homestays, strawberry plantations, cooking food for day visitors by the self-help groups, mountain and waterfall trails with village guides, and selling at the local shop in the village.

b. Non-tourism-related activity: The non-tourism-related activity includes agriculture, i.e., growing paddy, coconuts, cashew nuts, local vegetables, cows rearing and milk sale to the government dairy cooperative. The non-tourism-related activities are incorporated into tourism by using local vegetables and other crops in the food preparation for tourists, promoting the milking of cows by tourists to get an authentic village-life experience.

Outcomes

a. Economic Outcomes: To ensure consistent livelihood from the project, the villagers have to ensure a) regularized strawberry cultivation and sale during the season from November to April, b) Continuous tourist flow from September to May, c) continuous supply of milk to Goa dairy throughout the year d) agricultural activity throughout the year. The villagers are self-sufficient and spend very little on necessities. Therefore, there is no economic leakage reported from the project.

b. Social Outcomes: The villagers are a close-knit conservative Velip community, and the culture and traditions of the society are maintained. They are warm towards the tourists, and over the last ten years of the existence of the homestay project, they have not changed their behaviour. The “No alcohol” policy is strictly adhered to with tourists. It prevents drinks from being brought into the village and safeguards the youth from the vice of alcoholism. The success of community-based tourism depends on the active participation of local communities in the planning, management, and development of tourism activities. However, many communities lack the skills and resources to participate effectively in tourism development. The case points out the community’s lack of planning and managerial skills. Nevertheless, the community safeguarded local ownership and control over tourism activities.

c. Environmental Outcomes: Achieved in the village by a strict “Carry your own plastic back” policy for the tourists. The Forest Department protects the area, ensuring resource protection.

d. Institutional Outcomes: Bottom-up participation by the villagers in forming laws, policies, and decision-making needs to be considered. The decision to start the homestay and strawberry cultivation project was driven mainly by the NGOs and government (outside push factor). Hence, the slightest stoppage of monitoring by the NGO resulted in conflicts such as internal politics among the villagers. The institutional development at Aangan brings to the fore the fragility of the community, which necessitates the creation of substantial social resource based on communication and coordination as a strategy to help in capacity building, the absence of which leads to interference of government institutions, political polarisation, and thus failure of the project.

Aangan too relied on three key resources: natural resources (including the surrounding forest cover, waterfalls like ‘Sawri’ and ‘Mainapi’, and rich biodiversity), human resources (the local Velip villagers, most of whom were farmers trained for hospitality tasks), and social resources (a cooperative model with NGO facilitation that encouraged initial harmony and collaboration). This distribution is reflected in the pentagon on the next page (fig:5.2), where the emphasis is placed primarily on these three categories.

SUMMARIZED ANALYSIS OF AANGAN

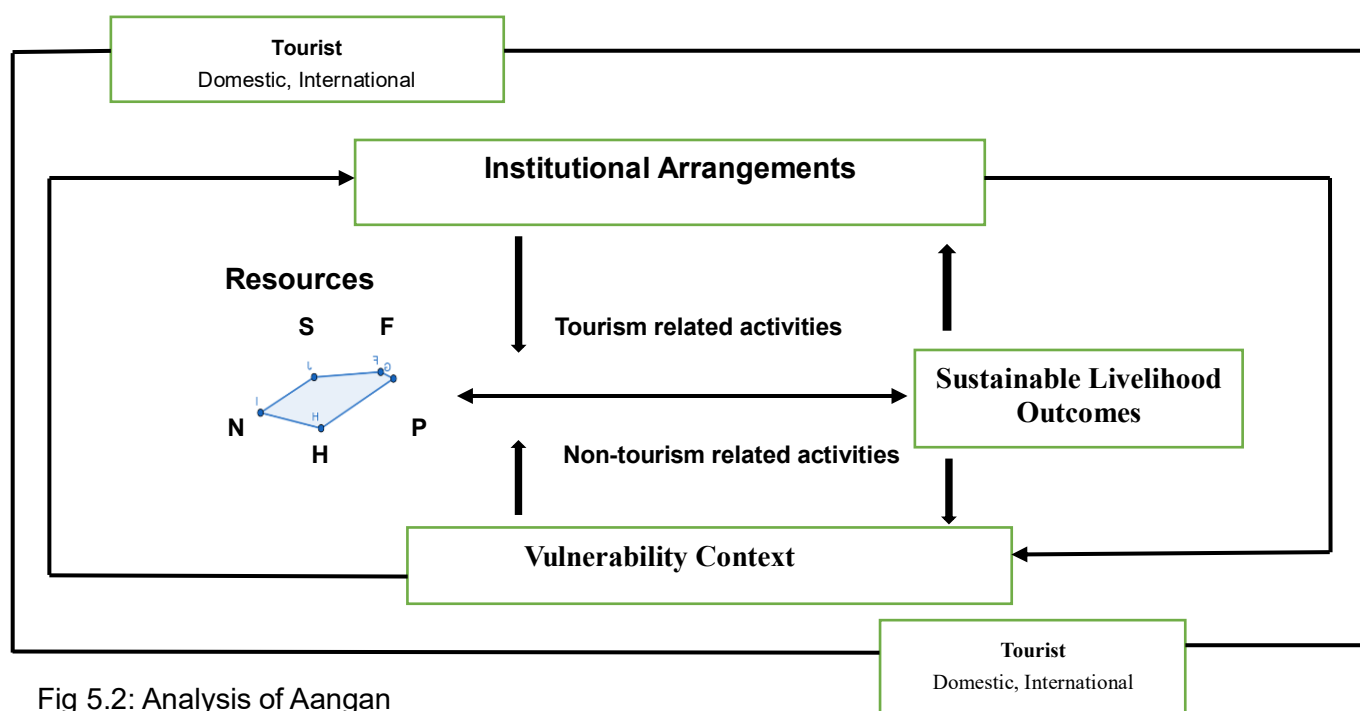


Fig 5.2: Analysis of Aangan

Source: Adapted from (DFID, 1999; Shen et al., 2008) and applied to the case by researcher.

In contrast to other community-based tourism initiatives, Aangan did not face immediate financial constraints, as it received an initial capital infusion of ₹7 lakhs from the Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG). A cooperative society and SHGs helped manage and maintain the homestay infrastructure, though the physical assets were limited and intentionally rustic. As such, the physical resources were modest, and while they enabled immersive village tourism, their underdevelopment placed limitations on the site's long-term carrying capacity.

Institutional arrangements, while offering initial support through NGO intervention and government aid (like subsidies under the Atal Gram Yojana and seedling distribution), paradoxically weakened community entrepreneurial spirit over time. Moreover, since Aangan is located within the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, coordination with the Forest Department and constraints due to tribal protection laws introduced further operational complexity.

In terms of vulnerability, the project was susceptible to external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which temporarily shut down operations, and seasonality,

which affected both tourism inflow and agricultural outputs. Additionally, ambiguous state policies and the absence of a robust framework for community tourism created an unstable regulatory environment. This necessitated constant negotiation with multiple government entities, contributing to vulnerability at both operational and institutional levels. Further, attempts to engage in external market linkages—such as selling strawberries to a city vendor—were undermined by fluctuating tourist demand, leading to irregular supply, strained partnerships, and at times, post-harvest losses due to unsold surplus.

Despite these challenges, the villagers achieved positive livelihood outcomes across economic, social, and environmental fronts. Tourism activities like strawberry cultivation, guided trails, and homestays supplemented their primary agricultural income. Their environmentally conscious policies and culturally rooted practices (like the ‘no alcohol’ rule and promotion of sacred groves) strengthened both community resilience and ecological sustainability. However, the eventual withdrawal of NGO monitoring exposed internal political rifts, pointing to a fragile institutional structure and the critical need for stronger, endogenous social capital and governance mechanisms.

Table 5. 2: Overview of Aangan’s SLFT Analysis

SLFT Dimension	Key Features at Aangan
Resources	- Natural: Forest, waterfalls, flora and fauna - Human: Velip community members, farmers trained in hospitality - Social: Cooperative society, SHGs, NGO facilitation - Physical: Basic homestays, minimal infrastructure - Financial: Initial funding of ₹7 lakhs by MSFG; cooperative fund management
Institutional Arrangements	- NGO-led project inception and training - Forest Department coordination due to sanctuary status - Central and state government support (DoT, GTDC, Atal Gram Yojana) - Tourism enterprise (Mrugaya Expeditions) for outreach - Lack of sustained government framework for CBT initiatives - Absence of a cooperative or collective marketing strategy to balance tourist sales with vendor commitments.
Vulnerability Context	- Shocks: COVID-19 halted tourism - Seasonality: Inconsistent tourist flow. Market vulnerability due to inconsistent tourist demand; breakdown of vendor relationship; post-harvest losses from perishable produce. - Institutions (Policy): Ambiguities and constraints due to sanctuary location and tribal protection laws - Trends: Benefiting from growing demand for alternative tourism
Livelihood Strategies	- Tourism-related: Homestays, strawberry plantations, food services, guided trails - Non-tourism: Agriculture, dairy farming, use of local produce in tourism
Outcomes	- Economic: No leakage, self-sufficiency, diversified incomes - Social: Strong cultural preservation, disciplined tourism policies

SLFT Dimension	Key Features at Aangan
	- Environmental: "Carry your plastic back" policy, forest conservation - Institutional: Fragile due to reduced NGO involvement; community resilience tested by internal politics

Source: Researcher's own contribution

5.1.3 Analysis of Wilderndest

1. Resources

a. Natural Resource: Wilderndest is located in the Chorla Ghats, encompassing around 1000 acres of forest land. This area acts as a crucial corridor between the Mhadei and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuaries in Maharashtra and Karnataka, respectively. The lush rainforests, diverse flora and fauna, cascading waterfalls, and scenic landscapes form the natural resource. The rich biodiversity, including several endemic species, enhances the ecotourism potential of the region.

b. Physical Resource: Wilderndest's physical assets include its 1000 acres of forest land area within the Chorla Ghats. It boasts of 37 cottages made of acacia wood (Capt. Nitin Dhond, personal communication, Feb 7, 2021) both with forest and valley view. The presence of a freshwater non-chlorinated infinity swimming pool, an 'Ayurshala', ropeway carriage, well stocked bar – all add to the recreational facilities. The resort also allows its own jeeps for travel purpose within the premise ('no entry to outside vehicles' policy), which align with its sustainable practices.

c. Human Resource: The human resource at Wilderndest involves its team of environmentalists, such as Nirmal Kulkarni and Rahul Khanolkar, led by Capt. Nitin Dhond. Their deep ecological insights and commitment to sustainable practices have been instrumental in shaping the resort's ethos. Sudhir Naik (MBA finance) in-charge of strategic planning, expansion and development along with Sameer, in-charge of all electrical repairs work at the site, are part of the core team at Wilderndest. Additionally, Wilderndest's staff members who are solely from the neighbouring villages, contribute to providing memorable authentic experiences for guests.

d. Social Resource: Wilderndest's social resource includes its relationships and collaborations with various stakeholders (Musavengane and Kloppers, 2020). The resort has formed alliances with well-known NGO groups of environmentalists and has established partnerships with local communities. Providing employment to almost 50 villagers in the vicinity and indirect benefits to the remaining through guided village

tours and sale of artifacts bolsters the partnership with locals. These connections facilitate collaboration and cooperation in tourism development. The positive online presence, customer satisfaction, and repeat business contribute to building the social resource of Wildernest.

e. Financial Resource: Wildernest's financial resource is generated through equity and loans. The resort initially invested 50 lakhs as seed resource, followed by further investments in subsequent years. The seed resource was funded by the promoter Capt. Nitin Dhond through personal equity. Subsequent amounts were through bank loans, financial participation of like-minded people and government schemes. This financial support enabled the development and growth of Wildernest's infrastructure and offerings.

2. Institutional Arrangements

a. Central Government: The central government plays a crucial role in shaping the institutional environment for Wildernest's sustainable livelihoods in tourism. Policies related to environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and sustainable tourism development fall under its purview. The central government establishes regulatory frameworks and provides funding for conservation efforts, which indirectly affect Wildernest's operation as a wildlife and eco-tourism destination. For instance, policies such as the National Wildlife Action Plan (National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031), 2019) and the Eco-Tourism Policy (National Ecotourism Policy, 2004) set the guidelines for biodiversity protection and responsible tourism practices.

Wildernest availed of 'carbon credit certification' and 'ecotel status' from the government, which adds to its niche value.

b. Tourism Enterprises: Tourism enterprises, including Wildernest itself, are vital stakeholders in the institutional framework. Wildernest's management and operations are guided by the vision of providing an involved ecotourism experience that contributes to the livelihoods of local communities while preserving the natural and cultural heritage (<https://www.wildernest-goa.com/>, 2023). Wildernest's collaboration with other private tourism businesses, such as transportation providers, adventure tour operators, and accommodations, enhances the overall tourism experience in the region. These enterprises play a role in promoting responsible tourism practices and creating economic opportunities (Sinha, 2005).

c. Local Community: The local community around Wildernest forms an essential part of the institutional framework. The community's participation, engagement, and capacity building are crucial for sustainable livelihoods and tourism development (Mishra, 2013). The community's traditional knowledge, skills, and cultural practices contribute to the unique experience that Wildernest offers. Local residents are employed in various roles within the resort, including guides, hospitality staff, and artisans, thus benefiting from tourism-related livelihoods. Community involvement also influences decisions related to land-use planning, resource management, and cultural preservation (Das and Chatterjee, 2013).

However, as Wildernest expanded from 30 to 37 cottages, it did face challenges in workforce retention. Employees trained in eco-tourism principles were increasingly recruited by higher-end hospitality establishments, leading to a staff reduction from 64 in 2015 to 50 in 2020. Although hiring externally was an option, it risked altering the resort's original vision of employing local residents and maintaining cultural authenticity. This trend also raised concerns about sustaining the resort's conservation-oriented values in the long term, especially with a perceived decline in local youth engagement in leadership and stewardship roles.

d. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): NGOs (Core team participants of Wildernest are members of these NGO's who are into environment protection) collaborate with the government and tourism enterprises to implement conservation projects, community development initiatives, and capacity-building programs. A prominent NGO activity of Wildernest includes setting up of the Mhadei Research Centre to monitor and conserve the wildlife around. Sustainable community development involving villagers from the six neighbouring villages is another major NGO activity of Wildernest.

3.Vulnerability

a. Shock: Wildernest is susceptible to various shocks, including natural disasters, disease outbreaks, and sudden changes in tourist preferences. Natural disasters such as landslides and forest fires can disrupt operations and damage the ecosystem (Mahajan and Kaushik, 2014; Scott et al, 2012). Additionally, the outbreak of diseases can lead to reduced tourist inflow and impact the health and safety of visitors and staff. Similar to the earlier cases the villagers in the peripheral area of Chorla Ghats were unaffected by the Covid-19 infections. However, the pandemic led to a complete

stoppage of tourism activity and a decline in the villagers' income (Chang and Wu, 2021). The unpredictability of shocks poses a challenge to the continuous operation of the eco-tourism destination.

b. Seasonality: Seasonal fluctuations in tourist arrivals can affect Wilderdest's livelihoods and operations (Beeton and Huang, 2009; Saarinen, 2006). The monsoon season in the region lead to a decline in 'leisure' tourists' due to unfavourable weather conditions. However, students of environment studies and nature lovers do visit Wilderdest in the rains for education purpose. This destination undertakes repair and maintenance activity as a strategy during the off season. Villagers too focus on agri based activity.

Despite the above strategies, financial challenges due to reduced tourist inflow, during the monsoon period, continue to pose a problem.

c. Trends: Changing tourism trends and preferences can impact Wilderdest's sustainability (Gosling et al, 2013; UNWTO, 2018). Though the trend now is seeing a shift from mass tourism to alternative tourism; keeping up with trends while maintaining the eco-friendly and cultural integrity of Wilderdest can be challenging. Staying informed about emerging trends and adapting offerings to align with them is crucial to remain competitive in the tourism market.

d. Institutional Policies: Institutional policies, both local and national, shape the vulnerability context (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Tourism Policy, 2019; Goa Tourism Policy, 2019) of Wilderdest. Policies related to land-use planning, conservation regulations, and tourism development guidelines impact the accessibility and operation of the eco-tourism site. For instance, changes in wildlife protection policies or zoning regulations could influence the accessibility of certain areas within the site. Collaboration between Wilderdest and relevant authorities is vital to ensure that policies are aligned with sustainable tourism goals.

A vulnerability experienced by Wilderdest was during availing of an 'ecotel status' for its tourism venture. Availing of the 'ecotel status' needed prior bank approval which was not without its challenges. In its formative phase, Wilderdest struggled to obtain financial assistance, as its conservation-driven model did not align with conventional benchmarks required for government incentives or bank loans. Star-category norms—such as AC rooms and visible promotional elements—were incompatible with its eco-centric design. Institutional support was lacking, with one bank even suggesting that funding would have been easier had the project been

located on a beach. Despite these barriers, Wildernest was eventually granted ecotel status after a government auditor recognized the authenticity of its sustainable practices during site inspection.

4. Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes

Strategies

a. Tourism related activity: Wildernest offers eco-friendly accommodations for tourists interested in staying amidst nature. Local residents are involved in managing accommodations, housekeeping, and food services. Their services also include guided nature tours to explore the surrounding forests, flora, and fauna; wherein local residents serve as guides, leveraging their knowledge of the ecosystem and cultural heritage. Traditional cultural performances showcasing local music, dance, and art organized for visitors, assists preservation of local culture and enhances cultural exchange.

b. Non-Tourism-Related activity: Local residents engage in subsistence farming and cultivation of crops such as paddy, cashew nuts, local vegetables and fruits for personal consumption. Cows reared by them provide milk needed for nourishment for the young and old at the village. They also collect non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as herbs and medicinal plants from the dense forests, used as ayurvedic cures for the villagers. These non-tourism-related activities are incorporated into tourism. Local vegetables, other crops and milk are sourced from these villages for preparation of local recipes at the resort so that tourists get an authentic village-food experience. Herbs and medicinal plants are used at the 'Ayurshala' to enhance the wellness experience. Community members engaged in crafting traditional handicrafts and textile products are sold to tourists and visitors during the village tours.

Outcomes

a. Economic Outcomes: Tourism-related activities such as guided nature tours, accommodation services, and cultural performances provide direct and indirect income sources for local residents. Non-tourism-related activities like agriculture and forest resource collection also contribute to household. Engagement in both tourism and non-tourism activities allows local residents to diversify their income sources and reduces dependence on a single income stream, thus minimizing risks associated with seasonal fluctuations in tourism.

b. Social Outcomes: Engagement in tourism and community-based initiatives fosters a sense of belonging and unity among local residents. Participation in decision-making processes enhances community empowerment. Traditional cultural performances and handicrafts showcase local traditions and cultural heritage to visitors. This also assists in the preservation of indigenous knowledge, languages and customs; passing down of the traditions to younger generations, and promoting intercultural understanding.

c. Environmental Outcomes: Biodiversity Conservation is achieved through a dedicated, fully self-funded Mhadei research center which documents facts about the flora and fauna in the area. Wilderndest focuses on ecotourism and responsible tourism practices, protection of forests and wildlife habitats which helps maintain ecosystem balance. “No outside vehicle policy within the premise” reduces carbon footprint. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as herbs and medicinal plants are collected sustainably, ensuring the long-term availability of these resources. Emphasis on environmental education and awareness promotes minimized environmental degradation, preservation of natural resources, and promotion of eco-friendly practices.

d. Institutional Outcomes: Wilderndest aligns with government policies related to environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and sustainable tourism development. The resort's achievement of 'carbon credit certification' and 'ecotel status' demonstrates its commitment to niche recognition and adherence to relevant governmental guidelines. Wilderndest's involvement in setting up the Mhadei Research Centre, aimed at monitoring and conserving local wildlife is an outcome of a collaborative partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

SUMMARIZED ANALYSIS OF WILDERNEST

Wilderndest is located in the ecologically rich Chorla Ghats, spanning 1,000 acres of forest that serve as a critical wildlife corridor between the Mhadei and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuaries. This biodiversity forms the core of its natural capital, attracting eco-tourists and supporting conservation-based tourism. Economically, the enterprise was initiated with a ₹50 lakh investment by Capt. Nitin Dhond, supplemented by bank loans and aligned investors, enabling infrastructure development and sustained operations. Socially, Wilderndest prioritizes local employment, hiring only from nearby villages and fostering partnerships with NGOs to

support conservation and community engagement. Resource based analysis shown in diagram below (Fig:5.3)

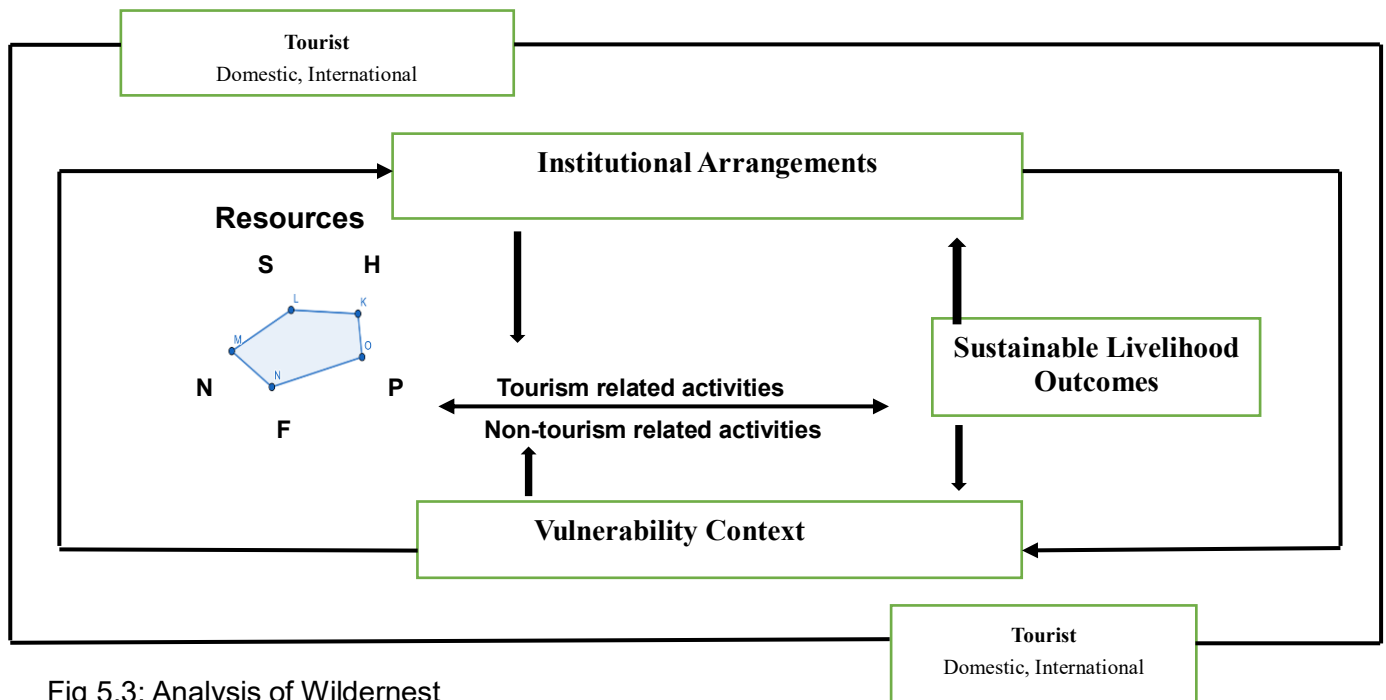


Fig 5.3: Analysis of Wilderdest

Source: Adapted from (DFID,1999; Shen et al., 2008) and applied to the case by researcher.

Institutionally, the resort aligns with national frameworks like the National Wildlife Action Plan and the Eco-Tourism Policy. It has attained ecotel status and carbon credit certification, evidencing its adherence to sustainable practices. Collaboration extends to private tourism operators and NGOs, while local villagers are integrated into resort functions, including guided tours. However, high staff turnover remains a challenge, with trained personnel often seeking employment in more lucrative establishments.

Wilderdest remains vulnerable to external shocks such as landslides, forest fires, and the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted both tourism and local livelihoods. Seasonal tourism dips, particularly during monsoons, are managed through off-season maintenance and educational visits. Institutional changes, including shifts in conservation and land-use policy, require ongoing compliance, adding layers of uncertainty.

Livelihood strategies encompass eco-friendly accommodations, nature-based experiences, and cultural performances, complemented by subsistence farming and the collection of non-timber forest products. These strategies contribute to income diversification and reduced dependency on tourism. Outcomes reflect economic resilience, strengthened community engagement, environmental conservation, and institutional credibility through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

Table 5. 3: Overview of Wilderndest's SLFT Analysis

SLFT Component	Key Points
Resources	- Natural: 1,000 acres of biodiverse forest, wildlife corridor. - Economic: Funded by promoter's capital, bank loans. - Social: Employment for local villagers.
Institutional Arrangements	- Government: Policies on wildlife conservation, eco-tourism. - Tourism Enterprises: Collaboration with local businesses and operators. - Community: Employment, decision-making, cultural exchange. - NGOs: Conservation and community development.
Vulnerability	- Shocks: Natural disasters, pandemics. - Seasonality: Off-season drop in tourism. - Trends: Need for alignment with eco-tourism trends. - Institutional (Policies): Land-use, conservation policies.
Livelihood Strategies	- Tourism: Eco-friendly accommodation, nature tours, cultural performances. - Non-Tourism: Farming, NTFPs, handicrafts.
Outcomes	- Economic: Income diversification, reduced tourism dependency. - Social: Community empowerment, cultural preservation. - Environmental: Conservation, eco-friendly practices. - Institutional: Government and NGO collaboration.

Source: Researcher's own contribution

5.1.4 Analysis of NV Eco farm

1. Resources

a. Natural Resource: The farm's rich biodiversity, comprising over 125 species of trees, butterfly species, and various bird species, contributes to the natural resource. It enhances the overall visitor experience, providing opportunities for activities like birdwatching, butterfly observation, and nature walks. The picturesque landscapes, including the backwaters, spice plantations, and lush greenery, are a vital part of the natural resource. They create scenic beauty that attracts tourists and offers opportunities for various outdoor activities.

b. Physical Resource: The infrastructure consisting of the wooden cottages, laterite cottage, dormitories, and farmhouse accommodation represent physical resource. These facilities provide comfortable lodging options for visitors and contribute to their

overall experience. The adventure equipment assists in offering various adventure activities, such as archery, rappelling, wall climbing, cycling, camping etc. Feni extraction facility gives the engaged and discerning tourist an authentic experience of the cashew fruit harvesting, juice extraction, feni distillation, tasting and cashew nut processing. Man made attractions such as the 'Nakshatra Vann' and Spice plantations also form a part of the physical resource of NV Eco farm.

c. Human Resource: The knowledge and expertise of Mahesh Patil (Founder of NV Eco farm), in agriculture, sustainability, and eco-tourism and his wife Smita Patil (Co-Founder of NV Eco farm and an ex-banker), in people skills and general administration, represent the core human resource. Their vast experience has been crucial in the establishment and sustainable management of NV Eco farm. The well-trained staff (amounting to a total of 28 villagers), from housekeeping to adventure activity guides also form a part of the human resource.

d. Social Resource: The engagement of local villagers as employees and their involvement in the functioning of the farm builds social resource. NV Eco farm's support of livelihoods through employment and community engagement strengthens social ties and community well-being. The farm's efforts to promote traditional practices, like cashew fruit processing and feni distillation, contribute to preserving the local culture. The promotion of Nakshatra Van also reflects the integration of cultural practices with the tourist experience.

e. Financial Resource: The initial investment made by the founder, Mahesh Patil, to transform his ancestral property into an eco-resort represents financial resource. This resource has been utilized to develop the necessary infrastructure, facilities, and services. The revenue generated from visitor bookings, farm and resort activities, and experiences also contributes to financial resource. This revenue supports ongoing operations, staff wages, and further development of the destination.

2. Institutional Arrangements

a. Central Government: The central government plays a crucial role in formulating policies and regulations related to eco-tourism and sustainable development. These policies ensure that NV Eco farm adheres to environmental norms, safety standards, and cultural preservation. State Government certification for an eco-tourism project, wherein license to construct 500 rooms have been procured by the promoter -Sh. Mahesh Patil. However, taking sustainability and carrying capacity of the venture into

consideration; Mr. Patil intends constructing a maximum of 25 cottages in his 60-acre property. NV Eco farm also collaborates with the state government body at Goa, viz Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) for tourism. This tie-up ensures increased footfalls and likewise revenue to this eco-tourism project.

b. Tourism Enterprises: Tie- up with Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) serves to enhance hinterland tourism. This partnership ensures domestic as well as international tourist visitations to the site. Promotion on the company website and social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp etc. along with the farm's listing on Air BnB ensure footfalls. Likewise, collaboration with other hotels in Goa has also been successful. It is noteworthy though, that the attempt to engage the 'taxi-drivers' association, a relatively strong body in Goa for tourist facilitation, failed due to high commissions demanded by the taxi drivers.

c. Local Community: The local community benefits from the enterprise's presence by getting employed in various capacities, such as farming, maintenance, and hospitality services. This diversifies their income sources. The community's traditional practices, like cashew processing and feni distillation, are showcased to tourists. This preserves and promotes local culture, ensures community's cooperation and active involvement in the tourism activities and overall contributes to social resource.

d. Non-Governmental Organizations: NV Eco farm has collaborated with some NGOs to raise awareness about sustainable practices, conservation of natural resources, and biodiversity protection. Volunteers from these NGOs provide vital information on the bird and animal life -both migratory and endemic to the geographic area of the farm, that enhances knowledge sharing with visitors.

3.Vulnerability

a. Shock: The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the vulnerability of tourism business. Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and health concerns led to reduced tourist inflow and revenue loss for NV Eco farm. Activities at the farm helped sustain the business, during this period. Mr Patil planted 1000 coconut trees and increased the number of cashew plantations, spices and vegetables. They also looked at value addition through jackfruit processing. Thus, activities were more focused on agriculture during the lean period. Mr. Patil too exhibited exceptional philanthropic traits by paying all the employees (tourism and Agri-based) their full salaries during the entire

pandemic period (Santosh Shetkar -Manager NV Eco farms, personal communication, Jan 16, 2021)

b. Seasonality: Like other peripheral destinations, NV Eco farm too experiences seasonal variations, with peak seasons ranging from September to May; attracting more tourists and generating higher revenue. During the low seasons (June, July and August) when the region experiences heavy rainfall, college student visitations and naturalists assist in handling this seasonal vulnerability (Mahesh Patil, NV Eco farms, personal communication, April 17, 2021).

c. Trends: Growing trends in responsible and sustainable tourism benefit NV Eco farm. Tourists seek authentic experiences, and NV Eco farm's offerings align with this trend. Engaging activities such as spice plantation tours, nature walks, cashew fruit and feni tours, local cultural attractions, zip flying, rappelling, camping, archery, night barbecue etc. act as a “pull factor” for experiential travelers.

d. Institutional Policies: Government policies of promoting hinterland tourism have benefited NV Eco farm. Changes in government policies and regulations related to environmental protection, land use, and tourism can impact NV Eco farm's operations.

4. Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes

Strategies

a. Tourism related activity: The tourism related activity of NV Eco farm includes hospitable stay at their cottages and dormitories, adventure sports, bird watching, and specialized tours (cashew fruit and feni, Nakshatra Van). The farm can expand the range of experiential activities beyond their existing ones.

b. Non-Tourism-Related Activity: Large plantations of coconut, cashew fruit, local fruits such as pineapple, papaya, mangoes, bananas etc and local vegetables exist at the farm. These farm produce and related products from these fruits and vegetables such as chips, pickles, spices, oils etc are sold at the restaurant and the booking/commercial office of the farm at Panjim. The non-tourism-related activities are incorporated into tourism by using local vegetables and other crops in the food preparation for tourists and visitation to the plantations by tourists to get an authentic village-life experience. Feni extraction from cashew fruit and feni preparation is a non-tourism related activity. Visitation to the site by tourists to witness this process,

participate if interested and taste the drink as well, is a way of incorporating this non-tourism activity into tourism.

Outcomes

a. Economic Outcomes: There is increased revenue from diversified tourism activities and local produce sales for the villagers. Job creation and employment opportunities for local community members is another economic outcome of this project. By participating in tourism activity there is enhanced livelihood security for the local community and a reduced dependence on a single income source.

b. Social Outcomes: The most visible social outcome of this enterprise by the Patil couple is the skill development and capacity building that occurs for local residents. This empowerment of local youth led to reduced migration for employment. Besides this there is strengthened cultural exchange between tourists and the local community. The villagers sharing their experiences and working together towards production of local goods for the project and market, leads to improved community cohesion.

c. Environmental Outcomes: Conservation of local biodiversity viz - improved soil health and reduced chemical usage, is maintained through sustainable farming practices such as adoption of water harvesting techniques, multilayer cropping, biogas generation, solar fencing etc. Likewise eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, water conservation, and organic farming attract responsible tourists.

Preservation of traditional knowledge about indigenous flora is maintained at the 'Nakshatra Vann' through detailed signages against each tree which explains the biological name of the tree, it's medicinal properties and the beneficial effects it has on a person with a particular zodiac sign. Utilization of only 1-2 % of the total available area for tourism expresses a deep understanding of the carrying capacity, reduced ecological footprint and promotion of responsible tourism by the promoter

d. Institutional Outcomes: Recognition and certification for eco-friendly practices of NV Eco farm by the Tourism department has enhanced the farm's reputation. Collaboration with GTDC and NGOs assists in sustainable development of the project. The project is however vulnerable to changes in regional policies and rules by the government.

SUMMARIZED ANALYSIS OF NV Eco Farm

NV Eco Farm leverages a balanced set of resources, with strong emphasis on natural resources—lush landscapes and biodiversity enhance its eco-tourism appeal. Promoters Mahesh and Smita Patil bring expertise in agriculture and sustainability, supported by a local team trained in tourism and adventure services. Its physical infrastructure includes varied accommodations, spice plantations, a feni distillation unit, and attractions like Nakshatra Vann. Social ties are strengthened through local employment and cultural integration, while financial resources stem from personal investments and tourism-linked revenue. Fig: 5.4 below shows the diagrammatic representation.

Institutionally, the farm benefits from state eco-tourism certification and GTDC promotion, while collaborations with NGOs support eco-education. However, engagement with the taxi union failed due to high commission demands, highlighting limitations in local partnerships.

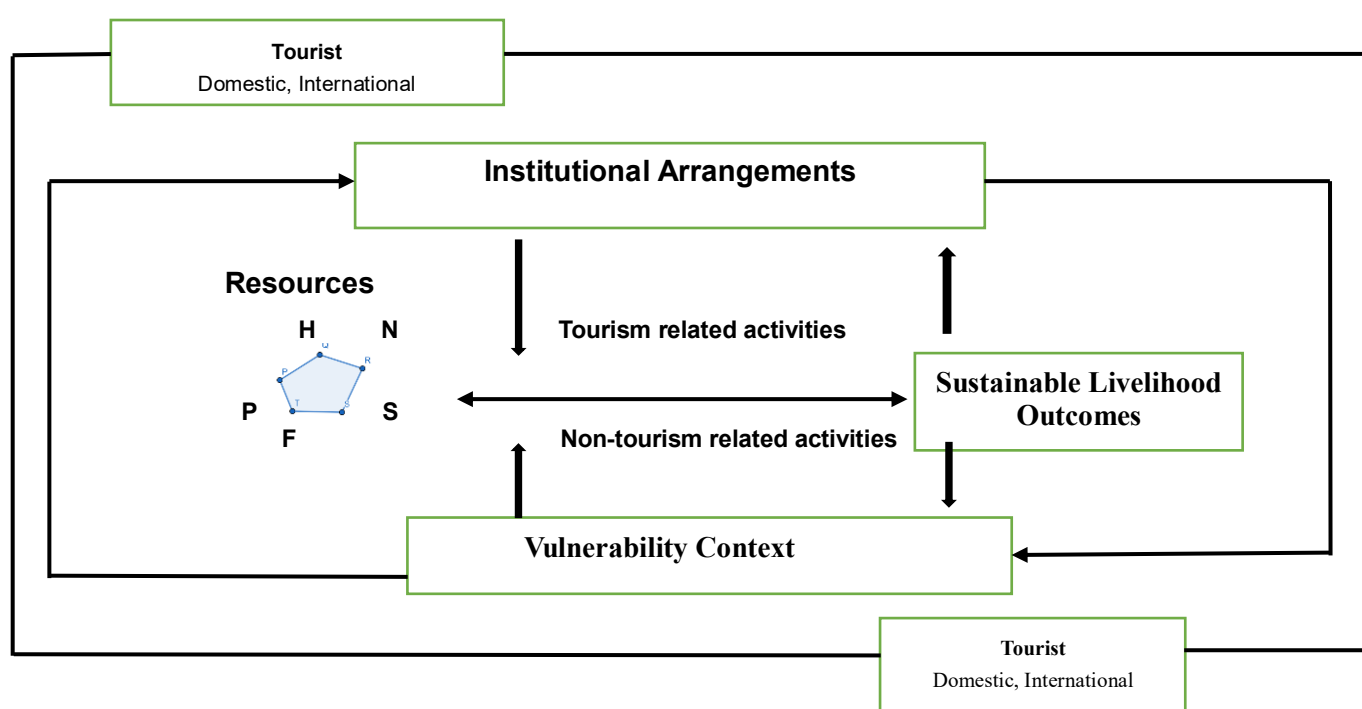


Fig 5.4: Analysis of NV Eco Farm

Source: Adapted from (DFID, 1999; Shen et al., 2008) and applied to the case by researcher.

Vulnerabilities include the COVID-19 pandemic and seasonal dips in tourism. The farm mitigated these by shifting focus to agriculture, ensuring income stability and staff retention. It aligns well with the sustainable tourism trend but remains sensitive to shifting policy environments.

Tourism-related strategies include adventure tourism, spice tours, and feni-making workshops. These are complemented by non-tourism activities like farming and processing spices and fruits. Outcomes include economic diversification, community empowerment, and environmental stewardship through organic and low-impact practices. Institutional outcomes are marked by formal recognition and policy-linked opportunities.

Table 5. 4: Overview of NV Eco farm's SLFT Analysis

SLFT Component	Key Points
Resources	Biodiversity-rich landscape, eco-infrastructure (Nakshatra Vann, spice plantations), skilled local staff, agricultural base, promoter expertise
Institutional Arrangements	State eco-certification, GTDC promotion, NGO support, limited success with taxi union, alignment with agri-tourism and sustainability frameworks
Vulnerability	Impacts of COVID-19, tourism seasonality, policy shifts; taxi unions, resilience via crop diversification and educational group visits
Livelihood Strategies	Adventure tourism, guided eco-tours, feni-making experiences; integrated farming and value-added production for stable income
Outcomes	Economic: income diversification, job creation; Social: reduced migration, cultural continuity; Environmental: conservation farming practices

Source: Researcher's own contribution

5.1.5 Analysis of Tanshikar Spice farm

1.Resources

a. Natural Resource: The farm's rich biodiversity, endemic crops, exotic fruits, and spices; natural spring water swimming pool, forest trails, the nearby Sawri and Mainapi waterfalls are all part of the natural resource of Tanshikar Spice farm.

b. Physical Resource: The entire 40 acres of agri land, on which exist mud houses, tree houses, eco-lodge, and natural swimming pool, providing unique and comfortable accommodations form the physical resource. In-house manufacturing unit for making papads, sweet dishes, and biodegradable serving plates and bowls, adding value to products; also make the physical resource. Equipment for adventure activities, apiculture and man-made swimming pool contribute to the physical resource at

Tanshikar's.

c. Human Resource: Chinmay and Gauri (Owner Couple) with their dedication, passion, and extensive knowledge of plants, history, and local ecology form the core of Tanshikar's success. 100% employment of locals for various tasks and activities for tourism and agricultural activities at Tanshikar's contributes to skill development and employment opportunities in the community.

d. Social Resource: Collaboration with the local community in terms of employment, sourcing, and engagement, contributes to community development. Sourcing products for the restaurant from local suppliers at 15% extra price than the city; builds relationships and garners loyalty. (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

e. Financial Resource: The project was 100% self-financed and initiated without external loans or subsidies. Revenue generation is done through various offerings, contributing to financial stability. Competitive rates for accommodations and activities, attract a broad customer base. (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

2. Institutional Arrangements

a. Central Government: As mentioned in an earlier case above - the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, plans for tourism at the national level; and under the umbrella of the State Government - Goa Tourism Board (GTB), the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), and the Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Government of Goa look after the tourism interests at the local level (Gore, 2019; Gore et al., 2023). These regulations ensure environmental conservation, responsible tourism practices, and support for local communities. The tourism model that was adopted by the Tanshikar couple was from an exposure to the agro-eco-tourism concept by the agriculture department, Government of Goa at one of the spice farms in 2002-03. Receipt of 'Best Organic Farmer' award to Tanshikar Spice Farm through the Shri Shri Agri Institute Trust on 11th of March 2016 in Delhi at the hands of Prime Minister Modi boosted the morale of the promoter couple. (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

b. Tourism Enterprises: No specific tie-up with any tourism enterprise. Engagement with the 'taxi-drivers' association, a relatively strong body in Goa for tourist facilitation and 'word of mouth' (WOM) publicity by satisfied customers lead to regular visitation

of 70% international and 30% domestic tourists during the tourist season from September to May. (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

c. Local Community: Tanshikar Spice Farm generates livelihoods for the local community by providing 100% employment opportunities in various roles, from housekeeping, guiding to farming. Collaboration with the local community ensures preservation and showcase of cultural traditions through preparation of authentic culinary delicacies at the restaurant. Cookery classes are held to cater to the interests of discerning tourists where this culinary knowledge is imparted by locals.

d. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs): No specific tie-up with any NGO. Involving villagers in the agri and farm activities by Tanshikar's lead to sustainable community development.

3.Vulnerability

a. Shock: The pandemic led to travel restrictions, reduced tourism, and health concerns thus impacting visitor numbers and revenues. Tanshikar's coped by focusing on their core competency of farming during the lean tourism phase.

b. Seasonality: The peak season (October to April) sees high occupancy, while the off-peak season (May to September) experiences lower occupancy due to monsoons. Seasonal variations in tourism are coped by shifting attention to farming; wherein workers also get a break from the tourism business. The couple intends taking an entire month or two off for personal family time during the monsoons in future.

c. Trends: The growing trend of eco-friendly and responsible tourism works in favour of Tanshikar Spice Farm due to its focus on sustainable practices and unique offerings. The increasing interest in wellness tourism aligns with the farm's yoga sessions and natural swimming pool, attracting health-conscious travelers. Travelers seeking authentic local experiences are drawn to Tanshikar's unique mud houses, tree houses, and spice farm tours.

Another contextual specific trend which might make the eco-agro tourism model of Tanshikar's vulnerable is the inheritance issue. Succession planning poses a challenge, as traditional patrilineal inheritance norms and the possibility of both daughters settling elsewhere post-marriage create uncertainty about intergenerational continuity.

d. Institutional Policies: Introduction of the agro-eco-tourism concept by the department of agriculture was just the right fillip that Chinmay was waiting in 2002-03; when he ventured into the tourism business for his traditional farm. However, changes in government policies related to tourism, land use, environmental protection, or taxation can affect the farm's operations and profitability.

4. Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes

Strategies

a. Tourism related activity: Include hospitality experiences at any of their facilities viz – mud houses, tree houses, eco-rest houses or wooden cottages in natural surroundings. Experiential offerings like spice farm tours, yoga sessions, trekking, and adventure activities are some of the other tourism related activity. Apiculture, inclusion of natural spring water swimming pool, cookery classes are further diversifications adopted in tourism.

b. Non-tourism-related activity: The farm cultivates a variety of crops, including endemic and exotic fruits and spices, to ensure a stable agricultural income. These are incorporated into tourism by manufacturing food items like papads and condiments from farm-grown ingredients for sale at the restaurant. Exotic spices like vanilla, pepper, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, cacao, curcumin etc are all sold at the resort's counter at a premium. Organic residues, including coconut and betel nut husks, along with the plantain and betel nut barks, undergo a recycling process to fabricate biodegradable plates and cups, effectively employed within the restaurant's operations as well as sold to both tourists and local markets. The 250-year-old house inhabited by the promoters is one of the major attractions for tourists. Knowledge of the unique aspect of local construction methods is shared with visitors, wherein the application of cow dung for floor layering and the utilization of thick mud walls function as natural thermal regulators, offering effective temperature control during both the summer and winter seasons. (Chinmay Tanshikar, personal communication, May 2, 2021)

Outcomes

a. Economic Outcomes: Diversified tourism and non-tourism activities contribute to higher income streams, enhancing the farm's economic sustainability. These wide range of offerings attract a broader customer base and ensures stability, as well as reduces dependency on a single market segment. The farms strategy of growing varied crops ensures multiple income streams from agriculture and contributes to the

farm's economic resilience. The farm also generates livelihood opportunities for the local community through employment in various roles, such as guides, housekeeping staff, and salespersons. Profits from the farm's operations circulate within the local economy, benefiting local businesses and individuals. By exclusively hiring 100% local residents for both agricultural and tourism operations and procuring grains and other supplies from the local community at a 15% premium, Tanshikar Spice Farm has effectively prevented economic leakage.

b. Social Outcomes: The farm acts as a hub for interaction between visitors and the local community, fostering cross-cultural exchanges and mutual learning. Involvement of local women in food processing and craft activities empowers them economically and socially, contributing to gender equality. By showcasing traditional mud houses, local cuisine, and cultural practices, the farm contributes to the preservation of the region's cultural heritage. Engagement in various activities, such as guiding tours or participating in yoga sessions, leads to skill enhancement for community members.

c. Environmental Outcomes: Cultivation of endemic and exotic crops supports biodiversity and safeguards native species within the region. The farm's emphasis on responsible ecotourism practices viz – recycling of waste used either as manure or manufacture of marketable products; educates visitors about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable practices. Sourcing of locally grown ingredients for consumption at the resort, reduces carbon footprint and supports local agriculture. Utilization of natural spring water for the swimming pool without any added chemicals reduces the farm's environmental impact and promotes sustainable resource management.

d. Institutional Outcomes: Collaboration with local taxi bodies and community strengthen the farm's position within the local institutional landscape. Positive engagement with local authorities and adherence to regulations and policies earn the farm credibility and potential government support. Tanshikar Spice Farm's sustainable practices serve as a model for other tourism enterprises and can influence the formulation of regional policies.

SUMMARIZED ANALYSIS OF TANSHIKAR SPICE FARM

Tanshikar Spice Farm relies heavily on its natural, human, social, and economic resources. The 40-acre organic farm includes endemic and exotic crops, a natural

spring water pool, forest trails, and adventure activities that enrich its tourism offerings. The physical infrastructure features eco-accommodations like mud houses and tree houses, alongside a food-processing unit that leverages farm-grown produce. Central to its operation are Chinmay and Gauri, whose knowledge and dedication drive the project's authenticity and success. With 100% local employment, the farm not only uplifts the community but also enhances guest experience through culturally rooted interactions. (Fig: 5.5 on the next page)

The tourism model emerged from early exposure to agro-eco-tourism initiatives by the Goa Agriculture Department. Tanshikar's growth has been largely independent, operating without external loans. While seasonality and the COVID-19 pandemic presented vulnerabilities, the farm's diversified livelihood strategy—combining tourism and farming—ensures resilience. Cultural preservation is integrated into its offerings through culinary classes, local construction heritage, and traditional recipes. Environmentally, the farm champions sustainable practices like waste recycling and chemical-free water usage. Institutional collaborations are informal yet effective, built around community relations and visitor networks. In doing so, Tanshikar Spice Farm has become a regional model of ecologically and socially sustainable tourism.

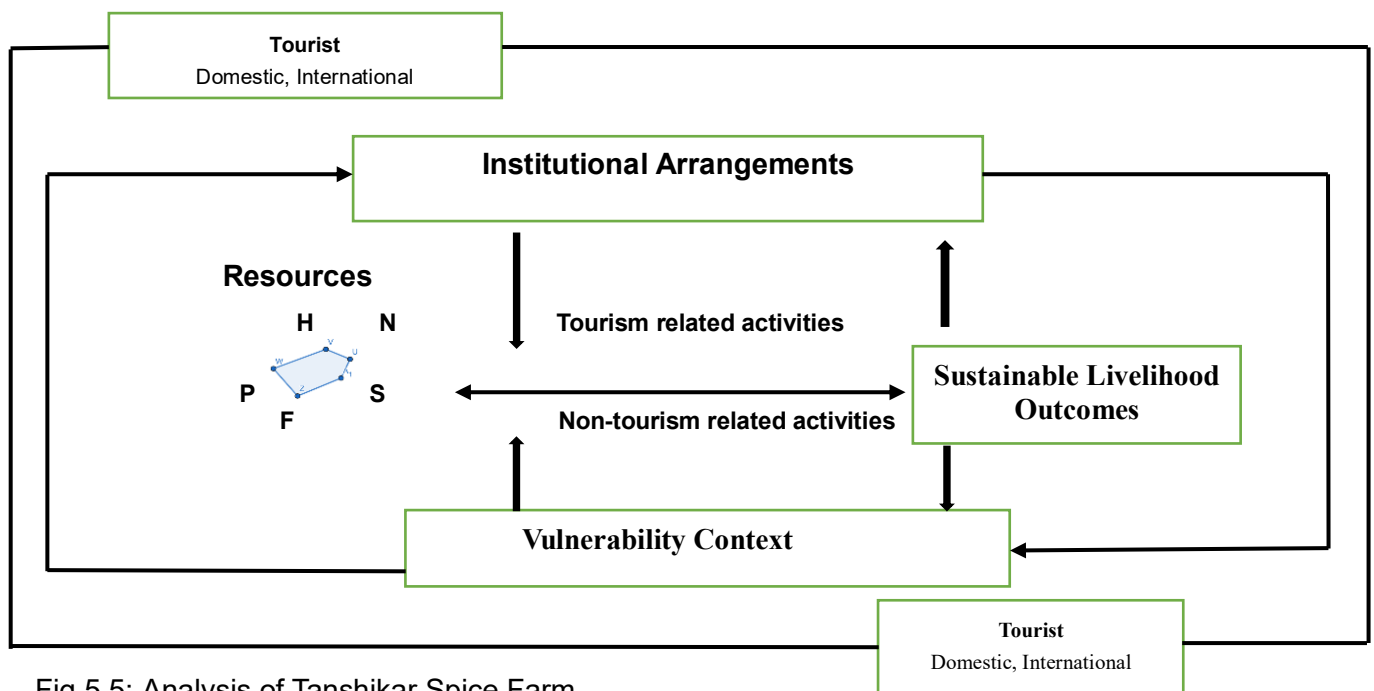


Fig 5.5: Analysis of Tanshikar Spice Farm

Source: Adapted from (DFID, 1999; Shen et al., 2008) and applied to the case by researcher.

Table 5.5: Overview of Tanshikar Spice farm's SLFT Analysis

SLFT Component	Key Points
Resources	Natural: Biodiversity, waterfalls, and spring water pool. Physical: Mud/tree houses, eco-lodges, processing units. Human: Skilled and knowledgeable owners, 100% local staff. Social: Community sourcing and premium local procurement. Financial: Fully self-funded, diverse revenue streams.
Institutional Arrangements	Support from government tourism/agriculture departments; informal promotion via taxi networks; community-based collaborations for food and cultural experiences; no formal ties with NGOs or tour operators.
Vulnerability	Pandemic impact led to focus on agriculture; seasonality addressed through staggered operations; growing trends in wellness and sustainable tourism support the model; inheritance issues pose future uncertainty.
Livelihood Strategies	Tourism: Hospitality (mud/tree houses), spice tours, yoga, adventure activities. Non-tourism: Farming endemic/exotic spices, in-house production of condiments and biodegradable products; cultural knowledge sharing.
Outcomes	Economic: Diversified income, reduced economic leakage. Social: Empowerment of women, cultural preservation, community upskilling. Environmental: Waste recycling, chemical-free practices, biodiversity conservation. Institutional: Policy alignment, informal partnerships.

Source: Researcher's own contribution

5.2 Individual Case Findings and Conclusions.

5.2.1 Research Findings The research propositions are reproduced, and the research findings are discussed.

Proposition 1a *Natural and Economic resources are strategically more important in comparison to other resources to gain competitive advantage for a peripheral tourism enterprise.*

Findings confirm that Natural and Economic resources are the most critical for competitive advantage in peripheral tourism enterprises. Natural resources form the core attraction, while economic resources ensure business sustainability and scalability.

Wilderness and Tanshikar Spice Farm successfully leveraged their natural resources (forests, spice plantations) and financial strength (self-funding and continuous reinvestment) to maintain a competitive edge. Nature's Nest and NV Eco farm utilized their natural surroundings to create unique experiences but faced financial constraints, requiring deliberate financial strategies. Aangan, despite having

strong natural resources and financial support, failed due to weak economic sustainability and declining social capital.

Thus, enterprises with strong economic resources could sustain and expand, while those lacking financial stability struggled, even with rich natural assets.

Proposition 1b *Natural, Social and Economic resources face significant challenges due to internal and external dynamics in comparison to other resources.*

Findings highlight that Natural, Social, and Economic resources are the most vulnerable to internal and external pressures, affecting business sustainability.

Nature's Nest faced environmental threats (Tamnar power project) and seasonality issues, affecting revenue cycles. Wildernest had to navigate strict government policies due to its location in an ecologically sensitive area. Tanshikar Spice Farm and NV Eco Farm faced market volatility and economic constraints, requiring diversification strategies to sustain operations. Aangan struggled with social challenges, including internal conflicts, declining community trust, and government interventions, ultimately leading to its shutdown.

These cases confirm that natural resources are impacted by environmental policies and external pressures, social resources are constrained by community dynamics and governance, and economic resources are challenged by market fluctuations and financial limitations.

Proposition 1c *Strategic importance of each resource is dynamic and contextual based on internal and external environmental dynamics*

The findings show that the importance of resources shifts over time based on business needs, market conditions, and external influences.

Nature's Nest initially relied on its natural resources but had to adapt by investing in skilled human resources and digital marketing to attract visitors. Wildernest, despite its strong natural resources, evolved by incorporating modern amenities (swimming pool, bar) to meet changing tourist expectations. Tanshikar Spice Farm expanded from an agro-tourism model to include adventure activities and

wellness tourism, leveraging human capital and economic investments. NV Eco Farm adapted to economic challenges by integrating sustainable farming and educational tourism to diversify income. Aangan depended on social resources and community engagement, but when social capital declined, economic sustainability was lost, leading to closure.

These cases confirm that resource importance is fluid, and businesses must continuously reassess their strategic priorities to remain competitive and sustainable.

Proposition 1d *Institutional arrangements tend to pose a larger resource constraint in comparison to vulnerability context*

Analyzing the five cases — Nature’s Nest, Aangan, Wilderrest, NV Eco Farm, and Tanshikar Spice Farm — reveals that this proposition finds only *partial support*.

In the case of Aangan, institutional constraints clearly emerged as a significant impediment to enterprise sustainability. Despite initial support from NGOs, Forest Department coordination, and government schemes (such as DoT and Atal Gram Yojana), the absence of a sustained government framework for community-based tourism (CBT) initiatives, coupled with the lack of a cooperative or collective marketing structure, severely restricted the venture’s ability to stabilize its operations. Here, the institutional challenges — namely fragmented coordination, lack of formalized governance mechanisms, and weak market linkages — overshadowed vulnerability factors like seasonality and pandemic-induced shocks. Thus, Aangan provides strong evidence supporting Proposition 1d.

Conversely, in the case of Nature’s Nest, while some institutional constraints existed — notably stringent eco-regulations and limited community participation — the greater challenges stemmed from the vulnerability context. Natural disasters, seasonality pressures, infrastructural threats (such as the Tamnar Power Project and highway expansion proposals), and shifting tourist expectations posed larger, ongoing risks to the enterprise’s stability. The enterprise was largely able to adapt to institutional demands through strong internal leadership and advocacy, but remained highly vulnerable to external environmental and policy shocks. Therefore, for Nature’s Nest, the proposition is not strongly supported.

Similarly, in the case of Wilderdest, although institutional arrangements involving collaboration with government, NGOs, and local communities were complex and at times challenging, it was the vulnerability context — including susceptibility to natural disasters, seasonality, and regulatory land-use constraints — that posed greater limitations. Wilderdest had successfully built strong institutional linkages, but external environmental and policy trends remained a more unpredictable threat. Thus, institutional arrangements were not the dominant constraint, offering limited support to Proposition 1d.

In the case of NV Eco farm, institutional arrangements such as government certification and NGO support were in place, though somewhat limited in effectiveness (e.g., limited success in taxi union engagement). However, vulnerabilities such as the pandemic, seasonality impacts, stringent non-co-operative stand by the taxi union and shifting policies posed more acute threats. The enterprise’s resilience stemmed from diversification into agriculture and educational tourism rather than resolving institutional gaps, further weakening the proposition’s applicability in this context.

Finally, for Tanshikar Spice Farm, the institutional environment was relatively supportive, with government backing and informal networks aiding tourism promotion. Challenges related to vulnerability contexts, especially those arising from pandemic disruptions, seasonality, and future uncertainties like inheritance issues, were more pronounced. Institutional arrangements did not emerge as the primary constraint, indicating little support for Proposition 1d here as well.

Table 5. 6: Summary of analysis for proposition 1d

Case	Proposition Supported?	Why?
Nature’s Nest	Not Supported	Vulnerability bigger constraint
Aangan	Supported	Institutional constraints heavier
Wilderdest	Not Supported	Vulnerability bigger constraint
NV Eco Farm	Not Supported	Vulnerability bigger constraint
Tanshikar Spice Farm	Not Supported	Vulnerability bigger constraint

Source: Researcher’s own contribution

To summarize, although the Aangan case supports the proposition that institutional arrangements can serve as major resource constraints, the broader cross-case analysis suggests that vulnerability contexts — characterized by environmental,

social, institutional policy shocks and trends — tend to exert a larger and more persistent influence on enterprise stability and performance. Therefore, *Proposition 1d is only partially supported*, with vulnerability contexts generally posing greater challenges than institutional arrangements across the cases studied.

Proposition 1e *Life cycle shall impact the strategic contextualization of a resource for a peripheral tourism enterprise*

The findings confirm that the life cycle stage of a peripheral tourism enterprise influences the strategic importance of its resources, requiring businesses to re-evaluate and adapt their resource priorities over time.

Nature's Nest in its early stage relied heavily on natural resources for differentiation but, over time, shifted focus to economic and human resources (e.g., digital marketing, skilled staff) to sustain growth.

Wilderness, in its mature stage, initially depended on social resources by employing only local villagers. However, through continuous innovation in product offerings (e.g., infinity pool, ropeway, curated eco-experiences), it expanded its workforce beyond the immediate community to neighbouring villages. This strategic shift allowed Wilderness to reduce dependency on local social capital while strengthening economic resources, all while maintaining the authenticity of its peripheral tourism experience. Aangan, initially successful due to community participation (social resources), declined as its social capital weakened, showing that resource importance shifts as business dynamics change. NV Eco Farm, in its growth phase, adapted by integrating sustainable farming practices (economic and natural resources) to maintain its unique selling proposition. Tanshikar Spice Farm, leveraging its strong human and economic resources, expanded from a simple spice farm to a multi-faceted agro-tourism experience, demonstrating how resource focus evolves with business expansion.

These cases confirm that the strategic importance of resources is not static—as a business progresses through its life cycle, different resources take priority to ensure continued competitiveness and sustainability.

SLFT Analysis of all five individual cases at a glance –

Table 5.7: SLFT analysis of all five cases –

SLFT Variables	Nature's Nest	Aangan	Wilderness	NV Eco farm	Tanshikar
1. Resources					
a.Natural Resource	Western Ghats Biodiversity; Sacred Groves activity; Proximity to Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Tambdi Surla Temple; Natural Landscapes; Biodiversity Conservation enhances natural assets; Eco-Friendly Practices aligns with concept of natural resource.	Natural surroundings, accessibility to two waterfalls - 'Sawri' and 'Mainapi', and the natural flora and fauna of the place.	1000 acres of forest land at Chorla Ghats, Area- a crucial corridor between the Mhadei and Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuaries in Maharashtra and Karnataka; lush rainforests, diverse flora and fauna, cascading waterfalls, and scenic landscapes	Rich biodiversity, comprising over 125 species of trees, butterfly species, and various bird species, picturesque landscapes, including the backwaters, spice plantations, and lush greenery.	The farm's rich biodiversity, endemic crops, exotic fruits, and spices; natural spring water swimming pool, forest trails, the nearby Sawri and Mainapi waterfalls
b.Physical Resource:	Mud-lined Cottages, Kokum Tree' Restaurant, Freshwater Swimming Pool, Adventure Activity Equipment, Jeeps	Initially, five homestays were identified, where tourists stayed with the villagers. Only toilet facilities and room beds were provided. The participation in building physical assets on a sustained basis was not done at the site.	1000 acres of forest land, 37 cottages made of acacia wood, freshwater non-chlorinated infinity swimming pool, an 'Ayurshala', ropeway carriage, well stocked bar, jeeps for travel purpose within the premise.	Presence of wooden cottages, laterite cottage, dormitories, and farmhouse accommodation; adventure equipment, Feni extraction facility, 'Nakshatra Vann' and Spice plantations.	40 acres of agri land; mud houses, tree houses, eco-lodge, and natural swimming pool; In-house manufacturing unit for making papads, sweet dishes, and biodegradable serving plates and bowls; Equipment for adventure activities and apiculture.
c.Human Resource:	Founders' Expertise, Staff Members, Specialized guides in Birding and Herping.	Villagers with agri skills useful for strawberry cultivation, knowledge of plant and animal life useful in tourism; had to be trained in providing food and beverage services, housekeeping and stewarding	Team of environmentalists, such as Nirmal Kulkarni and Rahul Khanolkar, led by Capt. Nitin Dhond. Sudhir Naik (MBA finance) in-charge of strategic planning, expansion and development	Knowledge and expertise of Mahesh Patil (Founder of NV Eco farm), in agriculture, sustainability, and eco-tourism and his wife Smita Patil (Co-Founder of NV Eco farm), an ex-banker, in people skills	Chinmay and Gauri (Owner Couple) with their dedication, passion, and extensive knowledge of plants, history, and local ecology form the core. 100% employment of locals done for various tasks and activities for

			along with Sameer, in-charge of all electrical repairs work at the site, are part of the core team. The staff members are solely from the neighbouring villages.	and general administration, represent the core human resource. A well-trained staff of 28 villagers.	tourism and agricultural activities.
d.Social Resource	Community Engagement, Partnerships with NGOs, Governmental Support, Tourism Enterprises, Stakeholder Relationships all leading to Community Upliftment	Cooperative project with active participation of the villagers. In the initial phase, there was constant monitoring by the NGOs. As a result, there was harmony among the villagers, and doubts, if any, were clarified by the NGO authorities. However, later political polarization at the local level led to a mild disruption of tourism activity.	Relationships and collaborations with various stakeholders, NGO groups of environmentalists, and employment to almost 50 villagers in the vicinity.	Engagement of local villagers as employees, their involvement in the functioning of the farm, efforts to promote traditional practices like cashew fruit processing and feni distillation – all contribute to community engagement and preservation of local culture.	Community development achieved through employment and engagement of locals. Relationship and loyalty garnered by sourcing products from village grocery stores at a higher price.
e.Financial Resource	Initial investment in infrastructure done through bootstrapping forms part of the financial resource viz -Promoter's investment of ₹9000 and borrowed resource worth ₹20,000. Funds generated through room bookings and other experiential activities carefully allocated towards marketing, staff training, sustainable practices such as waste management and	The financial asset includes investment of seven lakhs made by MSFG(NGO) as an initial contribution. Repair and maintenance of the homestay were looked after through formation of a cooperative society and a bank account under the society. The NGO managed all the operational and managerial functions.	Investment of 50 lakhs, as seed resource (through equity and loans), followed by further investments in 2013-14, 2016 and 2017 – all are a part of Wildernest's financial resource. Revenue generation through tourist visitations and a host of experiential offerings made to them.	Financial resource includes initial investment by founder Mahesh Patil which was used to transform ancestral property into an eco-resort. Revenue generated from visitor bookings, activities, and experiences also contributes to financial resource which supports ongoing operations,	The financial asset of this project involves a 100% self-financed initiative without external loans or subsidies. Revenue generation is done through various offerings, competitive rates for accommodations and activities, which attracts a broad customer base.

	otter conservation projects.			staff wages, and further destination development.	
2. Institutional Arrangements					
a. Central Government	Government regulations on environmental protection and conservation directly affect Nature's Nest due to its location within a biodiversity hotspot.	Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, provides funding for tourism projects from the national level to the state. State Government: Goa Tourism Board (GTB), the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), and the Directorate of Tourism (DoT), Government of Goa look after the tourism interests at the local level. The state government provides infrastructure facilities such as roads, electricity, and water supply to the village. Besides it also provides free seedlings to the villagers and monthly financial assistance/subsidies to the youth (under the backward class category) under 'Atal Gram Yojana' Absence of a cooperative or collective marketing strategy to balance tourist sales with vendor commitments.	The central government's National Wildlife Action Plan and the Eco-Tourism Policy setting guidelines for biodiversity protection and responsible tourism practices influence Wilderndest's operations. Wilderndest availed of 'carbon credit certification' and 'ecotel status' from the government, adding to its niche value.	State Government certification for an eco-tourism project, with license to construct 500 rooms procured. Collaboration with Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) done for tourism	Exposure to the agro-eco-tourism concept by the agriculture department, Government of Goa motivated the Tourism project at Tanshikar's. Received 'Best Organic Farmer' award through the Shri Shri Agri Institute Trust at the hands of Prime Minister Modi.
b. Tourism Enterprises	Collaboration with tourism businesses (Oyo, Expedia, and Trivago), local tour operators and transportation providers.	Mrugaya Expeditions a tour company based out of Goa conducts tours at Aangan with partner travel agencies from Bangalore. They also promote Aangan through the website and social media.	Wilderndest collaborates with other private tourism businesses, such as transportation providers, adventure tour operators, and accommodation providers.	Tie- up with Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC), and promotion on the company website and social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp etc.	No specific tie-up with any tourism enterprise. Understanding with the 'taxi-drivers' association, and 'word of mouth' (WOM) publicity led to regular visitation of 70% international and

				along with the farm's listing on Air BnB ensure footfalls.	30% domestic tourists during the tourist season from September to May.
c. Local Community	Nature's Nest provides employment opportunities to local residents, though the difficulty of keeping locally sourced people remains a persistent and bothersome concern. The resort serves as a conduit to sell products such as food items and handicrafts made by locals to tourists.	Five homestays and five self-help groups (SHGs) participate actively in the project. It runs through community participation and formation of a cooperative society.	The community's traditional knowledge, skills, and cultural practices contribute to the unique experience at Wilderndest. Local are employed within the resort, as guides, hospitality staff, and artisans, thus benefiting from tourism-related livelihoods.	The local community is employed in various capacities, such as farming, maintenance, and hospitality services. Presentation of traditional practices, like cashew processing and feni distillation, to tourists preserves and promotes local culture, ensures community participation in tourism and builds social resource.	Tanshikar Spice Farm provides 100% employment opportunities to locals in various roles, from housekeeping, guiding to farming. Cookery classes to the interested helps preservation of local cuisine and culture.
d. Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	Collaboration with environmental NGOs to contribute to conservation and biodiversity preservation.	Mineral Social Foundation of Goa (MSFG) initially financed the project with an investment of 7 lacs to rehabilitate the villagers. The by-laws and policies for forming a tourism cooperative society was first drafted by Mr Parag Rangnekar, the state coordinator for Goa of the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN); for Aangan.	Core team participants of Wilderndest are members of NGO's who are into environment protection. Prominent activities include setting up of the Mhadei Research Centre to monitor and conserve the wildlife around; capacity building and sustainable community development of villagers from the six neighbouring villages.	NV Eco farm's collaboration with NGO's raises awareness about sustainable practices, conservation of natural resources, and biodiversity protection. Volunteers from these NGOs provide vital information on the bird and animal life endemic to the area and raise awareness.	No specific tie-up with any NGO. Involving villagers in the agri and farm activities by Tanshikar's lead to sustainable community development.

3.Vulnerability a. Shock:	Existence within biodiversity hotspot and protected area exposes it to natural disasters such as storms, floods, and landslides. The Covid-19 pandemic, led to travel restrictions, reduced tourist arrivals; impacting revenue and necessitating adaptations to health and safety protocols.	The villagers in the peripheral area were unaffected by the Covid-19 infections. However, the pandemic led to a complete stoppage of tourism activity and a decline in the villagers' income.	The villagers in the peripheral area of Chorla Ghats were unaffected by the Covid-19 infections. However, the pandemic led to a complete stoppage of tourism activity and a decline in the villagers' income	Lockdowns, travel restrictions, and health concerns led to reduced tourist inflow and revenue loss for NV Eco farm during Covid 19. Activities such as plantation of 1000 coconut trees, increased number of cashew plantations, spices and vegetables undertaken during this period. Jackfruit processing was commenced. Social Entrepreneur- Mahesh Patil paid all the tourism employees their full salaries throughout the lockdown period.	Travel restrictions, reduced tourism, and health concerns thus impacting visitor numbers and revenues were the effects of the pandemic. This was coped by focusing on their core competency of farming during the lean tourism phase.
b. Seasonality	Low tourist visitations in monsoons are coped by inviting students of biology and environmental studies; undertaking maintenance and repair work of the cottages at the resort during lean season. Likewise high tourist arrivals during peak seasons can strain local resources and	The project is highly dependent on seasonal tourism demand, leading to fluctuations in income and employment opportunities for local communities. Tourism is the secondary source of income for the villagers. Agriculture is the primary one. Seasonal growth of strawberries - Breakdown of vendor relationship; post-harvest losses from	Due to unfavourable weather conditions in monsoons, the region sees a decline in 'leisure' tourists'. However, students of environment studies and nature lovers visit Wilderrest in the off season. The destination also undertakes repair and maintenance	Peak tourist seasons are from September to May. The months of June, July and August witness less tourists due to monsoons. College student visitations and naturalists assist in handling this seasonal vulnerability.	The peak season of October to April - sees high occupancy, while the off- season from May to September experiences lower occupancy due to monsoons. These are coped by shifting attention to farming; wherein workers also get a break from the tourism business.

	infrastructure.	perishable produce.	activity; and villagers focus on agri based activity.		
c. Trends	Nature's Nest benefits from the growing trend of eco-friendly and sustainable tourism. However, failure to align with these trends can lead to reputational risks and decreased demand. A few cases in example are: allowing air conditioning units within the cottages, swimming facility for leisure tourists, and transition from a stringent 'no alcohol policy' to a more permissive 'visitors can carry their own drinks'.	People shifting from mass tourism to alternative tourism (tourism market trends), would benefit this project.	The trend of shifting from mass tourism to alternative tourism benefits Wildernest. However, maintaining the eco-friendly and cultural integrity of Wildernest can be challenging, with the increase of visitors to the destination.	Growing trends in responsible and sustainable tourism act as a "pull factor" for experiential travellers at NV Eco farm, where they seek authentic experiences and engaging activities such as spice plantation tours, nature walks, cashew fruit and feni tours, local cultural attractions, zip flying, rappelling, camping, archery, night barbecue etc.	The farm's focus on sustainable practices and unique offerings of wellness tourism, tree houses, natural swimming pool, spice farm tours etc acts in its favour due to the growing trend of eco-friendly and responsible tourism. Inheritance issue creates succession uncertainty; with no clear heir
d. Institutional Policies	Presence of a bio-diversity hotspot having protected areas (sacred groves) in the vicinity, subjects NN's to stringent regulations of environmental preservation. Tourism policies; especially unfavourable ones can affect Nature's Nest e.g., the policy in June 2020 of the Government of Goa of implementing three projects viz - double tracking of railway line, Tamnar power project and	The village falls under the 'Forest Reserve'; thus, the project is vulnerable to policy changes by the state government and the forest department. The villagers protect their forests as the forest has sacred groves and many old beliefs attached to them.	Changes in wildlife protection policies or zoning regulations could influence the accessibility of certain areas within the site. Collaboration between Wildernest and relevant authorities is vital to ensure that policies are aligned with sustainable tourism goals.	Changes in government policies and regulations related to environmental protection, land use, and tourism can impact NV Eco farm's operations; e.g. government policies of promoting hinterland tourism have benefited NV Eco farm.	Introduction of the 'agro-eco-tourism' concept by the department of agriculture in 2002-03 benefited the promoters of Tanshikar Spice Farm.

national highway expansion – passing through the Mollem National Park and the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary (Herald, 2021), could jeopardize NN's sustainability.

4.Livelihood Strategies and Outcomes. Strategies

a.Tourism related activity

The tourism related activity at NN includes ecotourism activities such as nature walks, guided tours and wildlife photography workshops. Under hospitality services it provides accommodation and local cuisine offerings.

Homestays, strawberry plantations, cooking food for day visitors by the self-help groups, mountain and waterfall trails with village guides, and selling at the local shop in the village form part of the tourism activities at Aangan.

Offerings of eco-friendly accommodations and hospitality services, guided nature tours, exposition of cultural heritage through traditional music and dance performances etc.

Tourism related activity of NV Eco farm includes hospitable stay at their cottages and dormitories, adventure sports, bird watching, and specialized tours (cashew fruit and feni, Nakshatra Vann)

Include stay at any of their accommodation facilities in natural surroundings and offerings such as spice farm tours, yoga sessions, trekking, adventure activities, apiculture, natural spring water swimming pool, cookery classes etc.

b.Non-tourism-related Activity

Presence of an in-house spice and medicinal plants plantation unit, which gives opportunities for local farmers, contributes to biodiversity conservation and is a tourist attraction. Promoting local handicrafts and souvenirs contributes to livelihood diversification, viz – employment generation to locals, local culture preservation and immersive touristic experience.

Non-tourism-related activity includes agriculture, i.e., growing paddy, coconuts, cashew nuts, local vegetables, cows rearing and milk sale to the government dairy cooperative. The non-tourism-related activities are incorporated into tourism by using local vegetables and other crops in the food preparation for tourists, promoting the milking of cows by tourists to get an authentic village-life experience.

Non-tourism-related activities are incorporated into tourism viz: Local vegetables, other crops and milk sourced from the 6 neighbouring villages are used for preparation of local recipes at the resort, non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as herbs and medicinal plants are used at the 'Ayrshala' to enhance the wellness experience, community members engaged in traditional

Farm produce and related products from fruits and vegetables such as chips, pickles, spices, oils etc are sold at the restaurant and the booking/commercial office of the farm at Panjim. Local vegetables and other crops are used in the food preparation for tourists. Farm visitations are encouraged. Feni extraction from cashew fruit and feni preparation, a non-tourism

Endemic and exotic fruits and spices (such as vanilla, pepper, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, cacao, curcumin) from the farm are processed into food items like papads and condiments and sold at the restaurant. Coconut and betel nut husks, plantain and betel nut barks are fabricated into biodegradable plates and cups, and are used at the restaurant as well as sold to both tourists and local markets. The promoters 250-year-old house is a unique attraction.

			handicrafts and textile products are sold to tourists and visitors during the village tours.	related activity is incorporated into tourism by tourist participation in the process.	
Outcomes	Collaborating with local suppliers for food, products, and services stimulates the local economy and supports small businesses. The various tourism-related and non-tourism-related activities create employment and income opportunities for local residents, contributing to economic well-being.	a) Regularized strawberry cultivation and sale during the season from November to April, b) Continuous tourist flow from September to May, c) Continuous supply of milk to Goa dairy throughout the year d) Agricultural activity throughout the year – these steps if followed would ensure consistent livelihood from the project to the villagers. However, the villagers are self-sufficient and spend very little on necessities and therefore, there is no economic leakage reported from the project.	Guided nature tours, accommodation services, and cultural performances provide direct and indirect income sources for local residents through these tourism-related activities. Non-tourism-related activities like agriculture and forest resource collection also contribute to the household. Engagement in both these activities allow diversification of income, reduced dependence on a single income stream and risk minimization due to seasonality in tourism, to locals.	Increased revenue from diversified tourism activities. Project ensures job creation and employment opportunities for the local community. Participation in tourism activity leads to enhanced livelihood security for the local community and a reduced dependence on a single income source.	Diversified tourism and non-tourism activities contribute to higher income streams. Growing varied crops ensures multiple income streams from agriculture. Livelihood employment opportunities exclusively to locals and purchase of groceries from locals at a premium, prevents economic leakage.
a.Economic Outcomes					
b.Social Outcomes:	Positive social outcomes include 'skill development' of locals through training and knowledge sharing in birding and 'Community engagement' through collaboration with locals for farming and craft initiatives.	The close-knit conservative Velip community, are warm towards tourists and over the last 10 years of the project they have maintained the culture and traditions of their society. The strict "No Alcohol" policy prevents tourists from carrying drinks to the village and protects the youth of the village from the vice of	Engagement in tourism and community-based initiatives, participation in decision-making processes, traditional cultural performances and handicrafts exhibition, all promote local culture, heritage and a strong social bonding	Most visible social outcome is the skill development and capacity building for local residents. This led to reduced migration of local youth for employment. Villagers sharing their experiences and working together	The farm fosters cross-cultural exchanges and mutual learning viz – local women get economically and socially empowered through engagement in food processing and craft activities. This as well as exposition of traditional mud houses leads to cultural

		alcoholism. The community lacks planning and managerial skills. However, they have safeguarded local ownership and control over tourism activities.		towards production of local goods for the project and market leads to cultural exchange with tourists and better community cohesion.	preservation. Engagement in activities, such as guiding tours or participating in yoga sessions, leads to skill enhancement for community members.
C.Environmental Outcomes:	NN promotes ecotourism and sustainable land use practices contributing to the conservation of local biodiversity. An example is the 'Otter conservation project' undertaken by the promoter. Conducting nature walks and workshops raises environmental awareness among visitors, fostering a sense of responsibility for nature conservation.	Achieved in the village by a strict "Carry your own plastic back" policy for the tourists. The Forest Department protects the area, ensuring resource protection.	Biodiversity Conservation is achieved through a dedicated, fully self-funded Mhadei research center which documents facts about the flora and fauna in the area. Focus on ecotourism and responsible tourism practices, protection of forests and wildlife habitats helps maintain ecosystem balance. "No outside vehicle policy within the premise" reduces carbon footprint. Non-timber forest products (NTFPs) such as herbs and medicinal plants are collected sustainably, ensuring the long-term availability of these resources. Emphasis on environmental education and awareness promotes minimized environmental degradation, preservation of	Conservation of local biodiversity viz - improved soil health and reduced chemical usage, is maintained through sustainable farming practices such as adoption of water harvesting techniques, multilayer cropping, biogas generation, solar fencing etc. Likewise eco-friendly practices, such as waste reduction, water conservation, and organic farming attract responsible tourists. Preservation of traditional knowledge about indigenous flora is maintained at the 'Nakshatra Vann'. Utilization of only 1-2 % of the total available area	Biodiversity is supported and native species are safeguarded through cultivation of endemic and exotic crops. Emphasis on responsible ecotourism practices viz – recycling of waste used either as manure or manufacture of marketable products; educates visitors about the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable practices. Sourcing of locally grown ingredients for consumption at the resort, reduces carbon footprint and supports local agriculture. Utilization of natural spring water for the swimming pool without any added chemicals reduces the farm's environmental impact and promotes sustainable resource management.

			natural resources, and promotion of eco-friendly practices.	for tourism expresses an understanding of the carrying capacity, reduced ecological footprint and promotion of responsible tourism.	
d. Institutional Outcomes:	Nature's Nest's relationships with the local community, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental bodies, contribute to community development, skill enhancement, and sustainable practices. Collaboration with various tourism enterprises, tour operators, and travel agencies for increased market reach and customer base diversification, also strengthen stakeholder relationships.	Bottom-up participation by the villagers in forming laws, policies, and decision-making needs to be considered. The decision to start the homestay and strawberry cultivation project was driven mainly by the NGOs and government (outside push factor). Hence, the slightest stoppage of monitoring by the NGO resulted in conflicts such as internal politics among the villagers. The institutional development at Aangan brings to the fore the fragility of the community, which necessitates the creation of substantial social resource based on communication and coordination as a strategy to help in capacity building, the absence of which leads to interference of government institutions, political polarisation, and thus failure of the project.	Wilderness aligns with government policies related to environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and sustainable tourism development. The resort's achievement of 'carbon credit certification' and 'ecotel status' demonstrates its commitment to niche recognition and adherence to relevant governmental guidelines. Wilderness's involvement in setting up the Mhadei Research Centre, aimed at monitoring and conserving local wildlife is an outcome of a collaborative partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).	Recognition and certification for eco-friendly practices of NV Eco farm by the Tourism department has enhanced the farm's reputation. Collaboration with GTDC and NGOs assists in sustainable development of the project. The project is however vulnerable to changes in regional policies and rules by the government.	Collaboration with local tax bodies and community strengthen the farm's position within the local institutional landscape. Positive engagement with local authorities and adherence to regulations and policies earn the farm credibility and potential government support. Tanshikar Spice Farm's sustainable practices serve as a model for other tourism enterprises and can influence the formulation of regional policies.

Chapter 6

Cross Case Analysis.

Cross Case Analysis Through the Lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT)

This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the five peripheral tourism initiatives examined in this study through the lens of the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT). The SLFT, rooted in the broader Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF), provides a holistic structure for understanding how tourism can serve as a means to enhance livelihoods, particularly in peripheral regions. By examining assets, institutional arrangements, vulnerabilities, livelihood strategies, and outcomes, the SLFT enables the identification of both the enablers and constraints shaping tourism enterprises in such contexts.

While the framework offers a robust starting point for understanding tourism's role in livelihood generation, its application across the five cases reveals several critical limitations when analysed from an enterprise perspective. In particular, the SLFT does not adequately account for the internal strategic decisions made by tourism entrepreneurs, nor does it capture the dynamic interplay between micro-level business challenges and macro-level institutional structures. Additionally, although it highlights vulnerabilities and institutional constraints, the framework falls short in offering actionable pathways for navigating or mitigating these issues at the firm level.

This chapter therefore moves beyond the descriptive capacity of the SLFT and uses the cross-case findings to argue for the need for a more strategically oriented model—the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT). This proposed framework integrates the foundational elements of the SLFT while extending its utility to address gaps in strategic management, enterprise resilience, and long-term sustainability in peripheral tourism settings. The SBFT aims to provide a more comprehensive approach to understanding and guiding tourism-based livelihood

initiatives, particularly where communities are highly dependent on tourism yet vulnerable to institutional and ecological instabilities.

Given below, the cross-case analysis examines patterns across the five peripheral tourism enterprises to identify key resources, existing challenges and the livelihood strategies employed.

Table 6.1 – Structured summary of key findings

Enterprise	Resources	Institutional Arrangements & Vulnerability Contexts (Challenges)	Livelihood Strategies
Nature's Nest	- Natural: Forest ecosystem, biodiversity, sacred groves, otters - Human: Promoter's expertise, trained guides, support staff - Social: Local community ties, cultural capital - Physical: Cottages, restaurant, fresh water swimming pool, adventure equipment, jeeps - Financial: Bootstrapping.	- Stringent eco-regulations due to protected area status - Reluctance among some locals to participate actively - Shocks: Natural disasters (storms, floods), COVID-19 pandemic - Seasonality: Monsoon-induced drop in tourism; peak season overuse - Trends: Balancing eco-tourism with tourist expectations (e.g., AC, swimming pool, alcohol policy) - Institutional: Government proposals-viz Tamnar Power Project, railway and highway expansion	- Tourism-related: Nature-based tourism, birdwatching tours, guided nature walks, biodiversity education, otter conservation experiences - Non-tourism: Agroforestry, farming, local crafts, community engagement in cultural preservation
Aangan	- Natural: Forest, waterfalls, flora and fauna - Human: Velip community members, farmers trained in hospitality - Social: Cooperative society, SHGs, NGO facilitation - Physical: Basic homestays, minimal infrastructure - Financial: Initial funding of ₹7 lakhs by MSFG; cooperative fund management	- NGO-led project inception and training - Forest Department coordination due to sanctuary status - Central and state government support (DoT, GTDC, Atal Gram Yojana) - Tourism enterprise (Mrugaya Expeditions) for outreach - Lack of sustained government framework for CBT initiatives - Absence of a cooperative or collective marketing strategy to balance tourist sales with vendor commitments. - Shocks: COVID-19 halted tourism - Seasonality: Inconsistent tourist flow. Market vulnerability due to inconsistent tourist demand; breakdown of vendor relationship; post-harvest losses from perishable	- Tourism-related: Homestays, strawberry plantations, food services, guided trails - Non-tourism: Agriculture, dairy farming, use of local produce in tourism

		produce. - Institutions (Policy): Ambiguities and constraints due to sanctuary location and tribal protection laws - Trends: Benefiting from growing demand for alternative tourism	
Wilderness		- Natural: 1,000 acres of biodiverse forest, wildlife corridor. - Economic: Funded by promoter's capital, bank loans. - Social: Employment for local villagers. - Physical: 1000 acres of forest land with 37 cottages. - Financial: Self-financed largely with help from friends and relatives	- Government: Policies on wildlife conservation, eco-tourism. - Tourism Enterprises: Collaboration with local businesses and operators. - Community: Employment, decision-making, cultural exchange. - NGOs: Conservation and community development - Shocks: Natural disasters, pandemics. - Seasonality: Off-season drop in tourism. - Trends: Need for alignment with eco-tourism trends. - Institutional (Policies): Land-use, conservation policies
NV farm	Eco	- Natural: Agricultural land - Human: Founder's expertise, - Financial: self-funding, bank loans - Social: Local populace, villagers - Physical: Wooden & laterite cottages, adventure equipment for various adventure equipment, Nakshatra Vann, Feni extraction unit etc.	State eco-certification, GTDC promotion, NGO support, limited success with taxi union, alignment with agri-tourism and sustainability frameworks. Impacts of COVID-19, tourism seasonality, policy shifts; taxi unions, resilience via crop diversification and educational group visits Tourism activities: Adventure tourism, guided eco-tours, feni-making experiences NTA: integrated farming and value-added production for stable income
Tanshikar Spice Farm		Natural: Biodiversity, waterfalls, and spring water pool. Physical: Mud/tree houses, eco-lodges, processing units. Human: Skilled and knowledgeable owners, 100% local staff. Social: Community sourcing and premium local procurement. Financial: Fully self-funded, diverse revenue streams.	Support from government tourism/agriculture departments; informal promotion via taxi networks; community-based collaborations for food and cultural experiences; no formal ties with NGOs or tour operators. Pandemic impact led to focus on agriculture; seasonality addressed through staggered operations; growing trends in wellness and sustainable tourism support the model; Tourism: Hospitality (mud/tree houses), spice tours, yoga, adventure activities. Non-tourism: Farming endemic/exotic spices, in-house production of condiments and biodegradable products; cultural knowledge sharing.

6.1 Cross-Case narrative based on SLFT

Resources: Across the five enterprises studied a diverse yet thematically consistent use of resources is evident. All units leverage natural resources as core assets, though their scale and integration vary. Nature's Nest and Wilderndest are particularly rich in ecological capital, operating within dense forested areas and biodiversity corridors. These environments are foundational to their nature-based tourism models. In contrast, Aangan and NV Eco Farm rely more heavily on cultivated landscapes and local agriculture. Aangan capitalizes on waterfalls and farming land managed by the Velip community, while NV Eco Farm turns agricultural land into a base for both farming and tourism. Tanshikar Spice Farm, although also agro-based, demonstrates a stronger strategic use of natural and physical assets—such as its processing units and eco-lodges—that contribute to a diversified revenue model.

Human capital is particularly notable in Tanshikar and Nature's Nest, where founders' expertise plays a key role in enterprise functioning. Social resources such as community linkages and local employment are shared strengths across all cases, though more formalized in Aangan and Wilderndest due to their cooperative and NGO linkages. Financially, most enterprises began as bootstrapped or self-funded ventures, with the exception of Aangan, indicating a lack of initial institutional financial backing but strong entrepreneurial motivation.

Institutional Arrangements and Vulnerability Contexts: Institutional frameworks—both enabling and restrictive—shape the operating environment for each case. Nature's Nest and Wilderndest function under significant eco-regulatory constraints due to their proximity to protected areas. Despite these, they have carved out niches through informal collaboration with government and tourism stakeholders. Aangan's model reflects high institutional complexity: supported at inception by NGOs and government initiatives (e.g., Atal Gram Yojana exercised afterwards), it later struggled due to policy ambiguities related to tribal protection and sanctuary laws. The cooperative structure, while enabling initial community cohesion, faces challenges in long-term viability, especially due to the absence of a formal marketing and

governance framework. NV Eco Farm and Tanshikar operate within relatively flexible institutional settings, relying more on individual leadership and informal networks like taxi unions and departmental collaborations. Both units faced pandemic-induced setbacks, though Tanshikar's staggered seasonal model and product diversification helped it recover.

Vulnerability to seasonality and shocks (e.g., monsoon tourism slump, COVID-19) is a cross-cutting theme. However, strategic responses vary: Nature's Nest integrated agroforestry; Aangan saw breakdowns in vendor relationships; Wildernest focussed on nature tours; while Tanshikar and NV Eco farm adapted through non-tourism resilience such as agriculture and wellness-focused tourism.

Livelihood Strategies: Livelihood strategies in all five enterprises are hybrid—combining tourism and non-tourism elements for sustainability. Nature's Nest and Wildernest prioritize eco-tourism with educational and conservation-oriented experiences like otter watching or biodiversity trails, supplemented by agroforestry and local crafts. Aangan integrates homestay-based tourism with agriculture and dairy. Its model aligns with community-based tourism ideals, yet lacks robust commercial strategy, which affects its capacity to scale. NV Eco Farm leverages adventure and agri-tourism together, making it attractive for educational and group tours, while also investing in value-added agricultural production. Tanshikar presents a highly diversified portfolio: spice tours, eco-lodging, wellness experiences, and endemic farming create a resilient and adaptive enterprise. Its ability to balance tourism with agriculture, alongside minimal institutional dependency, marks it as a self-sustained business model.

While all cases align with SLFT's emphasis on diverse and sustainable livelihood sources, only a few (notably Tanshikar and Nature's Nest) show evidence of strategically linking livelihood strategies with long-term business planning and market responsiveness.

Outcomes: Outcomes across cases reflect mixed success. On the positive side, all five enterprises generate local employment, promote environmental awareness, and enhance cultural pride. Social cohesion, particularly in Wildernest and Aangan,

strengthens community agency. NV Eco Farm and Tanshikar show economic stability through product diversification and local market engagement.

However, challenges persist. Aangan's sustainability is fragile due to institutional dependency and market inconsistency. Nature's Nest and Wilderrest face ongoing conflicts between conservation imperatives and tourist expectations, particularly regarding infrastructure and guest preferences. NV Eco Farm shows potential but struggles with inconsistent external collaboration (e.g., taxi unions). Tanshikar alone reflects a well-rounded outcome: financial viability, ecological stewardship, and minimal institutional friction.

6.2 Limitations of SLFT in the Context of Peripheral Tourism Enterprises

While the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (SLFT) offers a robust lens to understand the interplay of resources, institutions, vulnerabilities, and strategies in community and nature-based tourism, a deeper cross-case analysis reveals its limitations in guiding *strategic enterprise-level decisions*—especially for commercially-driven, socially-rooted ventures in peripheral settings.

SLFT's Focus on Resource Mapping Over Strategic Deployment:

SLFT effectively maps the types of capital (natural, human, social, physical, financial) that support livelihood generation. However, it offers limited guidance on how to strategically deploy, prioritize, or commercialize these resources. For example, while Aangan and NV Eco Farm both possess similar levels of natural and social capital, their outcomes differ widely due to the presence or absence of business planning, product-market alignment, and leadership strategies—elements beyond SLFT's scope.

Insufficient Emphasis on Market Dynamics and Business Viability:

SLFT does not adequately address market responsiveness, demand fluctuations, or the need for competitive differentiation—factors critical for survival in the tourism sector. While all enterprises face seasonality, only a few (like Tanshikar and Nature's Nest) adapt through strategic innovations such as diversified offerings or eco-

educational experiences. SLFT, in its current form, cannot explain why some enterprises are resilient and others fragile under similar conditions.

Institutional Arrangements Are Mapped but Not Strategically

Engaged: Although SLFT accounts for the institutional context, it treats institutions largely as external enablers or constraints, rather than as systems that can be strategically negotiated, shaped, or leveraged. For instance, while Aangan's cooperative and NGO support are mapped under SLFT, the framework does not provide tools to evaluate governance weaknesses or marketing bottlenecks. Similarly, NV Eco Farm's limited success with taxi unions remains unexplained within SLFT.

Lack of Tools to Address Strategic Leadership and Management: The framework omits the role of strategic intent, leadership, and managerial interventions—aspects that were clearly central to the success of Tanshikar, Wildernest, and Nature's Nest. These enterprises thrived not simply due to resource abundance, but due to the promoters' ability to mobilize, brand, and innovate. SLFT does not incorporate managerial agency or entrepreneurial foresight as critical livelihood enhancers.

Outcomes in SLFT Are Not Linked to Scalability or Long-Term

Sustainability: SLFT tracks outcomes such as employment or social inclusion but fails to connect these to financial sustainability, scalability, or adaptive capability. This is evident in the Aangan case, where positive social outcomes exist but the absence of strategic scaling mechanisms undermines its continuity. By contrast, enterprises like Tanshikar have grown by reinvesting in product diversification, yet SLFT lacks a mechanism to capture such enterprise-level strategic evolution.

6.3 Rationale for Introducing the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)

The above limitations highlight the need for an enhanced framework that goes beyond livelihood mapping to strategic business thinking—particularly for peripheral tourism enterprises that seek both social impact and commercial viability.

The proposed **Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)** builds upon the foundations of SLFT but integrates three crucial dimensions:

- **Strategic Resource Management** (informed by the Resource-Based View - RBV),
- **Context-Specific Strategic Planning** (using Mintzberg's strategy),
- **Sustainability-Oriented Livelihood Logic** (carried over from SLFT but enhanced with outcome tracking and adaptation mechanisms).

This framework aims to bridge the gap between livelihood sustenance and enterprise sustainability, positioning local tourism ventures not just as livelihood mechanisms, but as strategic social businesses.

6.4 An introduction to Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)

SLFT framework talks of capitals like natural, physical, human, social, and financial and then looks at the livelihood outcome through institutional arrangements and vulnerability context. The research has posited and modified the SLFT framework to evaluate business sustainability of peripheral tourism enterprises from a strategic viewpoint keeping RBV theory as a backdrop and evaluating them through Mintzberg's strategies.

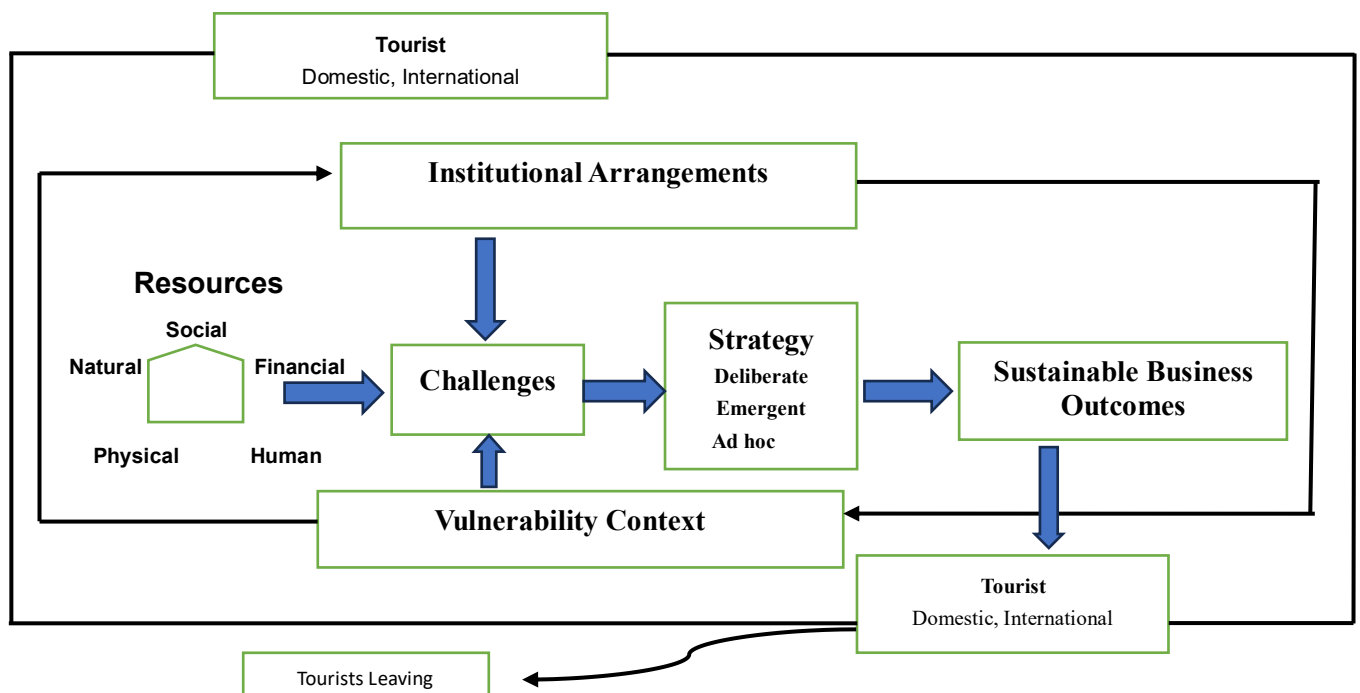


Fig 6.1: SLFT framework from Shen et al; (2008) modified by researcher. Now referred to as **Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)**

This model looks at various enterprises and evaluates the sustainability through the following steps –

i) ascertaining resources of the enterprise categorizing them into strategically important (those that determine competitive advantage for the enterprise directly) and strategically not so important (those that impact the competitive advantage of the enterprise implicitly. In short term they may assume critical proportions which may give an impression of impacting the competitive advantage of the enterprise directly; however, are not strategically important in the long run). These resources were termed as capital under SLFT.

ii) These resources are then evaluated in terms of the impact they have due to institutional arrangements and vulnerability context.

iii) Both institutional arrangements and vulnerability context are external environments that impact the resources positively or negatively giving rise to opportunities (when positive) but rarely, and challenges (mostly) in case of peripheral tourism enterprises.

iv) Evaluate nature of decisions (strategic, tactical or operational) taken by the entrepreneurs to cope with challenges arising due to the interplay of institutional arrangement and vulnerability context.

v) These decisions are then categorized under Mintzberg's strategies namely Deliberate, Emergent and Ad hoc.

vi) The strategies are then evaluated for their impact on business sustainability.

The framework shall help academicians, practitioners, government, society and all other stakeholders to take a strategic viewpoint towards sustainable peripheral destinations; in absence of which, the tourist may move away from such destinations.

Table 6. 2: Cross-Case Application of SBFT Variables

SBFT Variable	Nature's Nest	Aangan	Wildernest	NV Eco farm	Tanshikar Spice Farm
Strategic Resources	Birding niche, expert knowledge, partnerships with naturalists	NGO network, skilled women workforce, cultural identity	Land bank, eco-design infrastructure, wilderness branding	Agricultural land, eco-education appeal	Organic spice brand, forest setting, traditional knowledge

SBFT Variable	Nature's Nest	Aangan	Wilderness	NV Eco farm	Tanshikar Spice Farm
Other (Non-Strategic) Resources	Seasonal local staff, limited marketing budget	Basic infrastructure, part-time trainers	Limited digital marketing, reliance on word-of-mouth	Dependency on schools for educational visits	Limited accommodation facilities, basic marketing
Institutional Arrangements (Impact)	Favourable government support, eco-certifications	NGO dependency, limited government linkage	Minimal interference, flexible norms	Bureaucratic hurdles in certifications	Compliant but not supported actively
Vulnerability Context	Seasonal demand fluctuations, skill retention	Breakdown of vendor relationship; post-harvest losses from perishable produce.	Natural disaster risks, resource management	Tourism seasonality, educational group visits closure during school holidays	Market volatility, monsoon damages
Key Challenges (Emerging from IA + VC)	Sustaining trained human capital; off-season income	NGO dependency, Lack of market knowledge	Infrastructure maintenance; resource depletion risk	Bureaucratic hurdles, Irregular revenue	Limited market access; natural threats
Strategy Type Used	Deliberate: Long-term scaling plan with niche market Emergent: Responding to off-season slump via tie-ups Ad hoc: Business suspension during Covid-19	Deliberate: Training villagers in hospitality, promoting local cuisine, assigning guides Emergent: Adjusted activities based on NGO programs Ad hoc: Sporadic market engagement efforts; Tourism suspension during Covid-19	Deliberate: Environmental design and sustainability Emergent: Response to eco-tourism demand shift Ad hoc: Temporary shut down during Covid-19	Deliberate: Sustainable farming integration, farm-to-table concept Emergent: Adding pool and guest activities Ad hoc: Frequent last-minute responses to crises Repurposing workforce to farm work during Covid-19	Deliberate: Authentic rustic surroundings and organic farming Emergent: Adapted to tourist interest in spice trails Ad hoc: Sanitation measures, shifting to farm product sales during Covid-19
Sustainable Business Outcome	Continued operations with reduced profits	Business closed due to loss of social capital	Sustained growth and economic expansion	Continued operations, economic stability	Consistent profitability and growth

Source: Researcher's own contribution

The research propositions are now produced, and the analysis is further discussed.

Proposition 2a – *Social entrepreneurship is an important strategic decision to mitigate challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprises.*

Findings confirm that social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in overcoming challenges by integrating community participation, local employment, and environmental conservation.

Nature's Nest and Tanshikar Spice Farm successfully used market intermediary models to support local producers while maintaining authenticity. Wilderdest strategically balanced social and economic goals, ensuring long-term sustainability. NV Eco Farm leveraged sustainable agriculture and tourism for economic viability. Aangan, despite its initial success, failed due to declining community engagement, proving that social entrepreneurship alone is insufficient without sustained participation.

Thus, while social entrepreneurship helps mitigate challenges, its success depends on continuous community involvement and adaptability.

Proposition 2b – *Deliberate strategies are effective to cope with challenges related to strategic resources.*

Findings indicate that deliberate strategies ensure long-term sustainability by effectively managing strategic resources.

Wilderdest sustained growth by innovating its offerings, reducing dependence on local social capital while expanding employment. Nature's Nest safeguarded its natural resources by opposing the Tamnar power project and maintaining an eco-friendly model. Tanshikar Spice Farm used sustainable farming and integrated tourism to strengthen economic and human resources.

Businesses that employ deliberate, proactive strategies secure a competitive edge and business sustainability in peripheral tourism.

Proposition 2c – *Emergent and ad hoc strategies are effective with resources that are strategically not so important.*

Findings confirm that emergent and ad hoc strategies help manage short-term challenges but are not substitutes for long-term planning.

NV Eco Farm introduced swimming pools and guest activities in response to market demand, enhancing visitor experience. Nature's Nest adapted by allowing air-conditioning and building a natural swimming pool to meet tourist expectations. Aangan introduced SHGs to manage food services, an emergent response to internal conflicts, but lacked a long-term strategy. During COVID-19, ad hoc strategies (e.g., farm sales at NV Eco Farm, sanitation measures at Tanshikar) helped businesses sustain operations.

While these strategies provide flexibility, over-reliance on them (e.g., Aangan) can lead to instability.

Proposition 2d – *The type of strategy used to cope with a challenge of resource constraint directly impacts the sustainability of a peripheral tourism enterprise.*

Findings demonstrate that the choice of strategy determines long-term business viability.

Wilderness and Tanshikar Spice Farm used deliberate strategies, ensuring consistent growth and profitability. NV Eco Farm and Nature's Nest balanced deliberate and emergent strategies, enabling steady operations. Aangan, lacking a sustainable long-term strategy, failed despite emergent efforts.

Businesses that align strategies with resource constraints achieve better sustainability outcomes, while those relying on short-term fixes face closure risks.

The analysis of the five peripheral tourism ventures reveals a range of coping strategies adopted to navigate challenges posed by institutional arrangements (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2019) and vulnerability contexts (Amoah et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2022) through the utilization of key strategic and non-strategic resources (Barney, 1991; Dees, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The classification of these

strategies into deliberate (Mintzberg, 1978; Richards & Munsters, 2010), emergent (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005), and ad hoc (Mintzberg, 1994; Suarez-Barraza & Huerta-Carvajal, 2023) facilitates a clearer identification of sustainable business outcomes.

Table 6.3: Table of Propositions

S.No	Proposition	Supported/Not Supported
1	Proposition 1a Natural and Economic resources are strategically more important in comparison to other resources to gain competitive advantage for a peripheral tourism enterprise	Supported
2	Proposition 1b Natural, Social and Economic resources face significant challenges due to internal and external dynamics in comparison to other resources.	Supported
3	Proposition 1c Strategic importance of each resource is dynamic and contextual based on internal and external environmental dynamics	Supported
4	Proposition 1d Institutional arrangements tend to pose a larger resource constraint in comparison to vulnerability context	Partially Supported
5	Proposition 1e Life cycle shall impact the strategic contextualization of a resource for a peripheral tourism enterprise	Supported
6	Proposition 2a Social entrepreneurship is an important strategic decision to mitigate challenges faced by peripheral tourism enterprise.	Supported
7	Proposition 2b Deliberate strategies are effective to cope up with challenges related to strategic resources	Supported
8	Proposition 2c Emergent and ad hoc strategies are effective with resources which are strategically not so important.	Supported
9	Proposition 2d Type of strategy used to cope with a challenge of resource constraint directly impacts the sustainability of a peripheral tourism enterprise.	Supported

Chapter 7

Cross Case Findings and Conclusions.

The cross-case findings provide a holistic understanding of how peripheral tourism enterprises navigate resource constraints (Dees, 1998; Sathiyaseelan et al., 2024), institutional arrangements (Kolawole et al., 2023; Mikulcak, 2015), and vulnerability contexts (Hampton et al., 2018; Onur et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2008) using strategic, emergent, and ad hoc strategies. The analysis reinforces the role of social entrepreneurship (Jóhannesson & Huijbens, 2010; Solvoll et al., 2015), resource-based strategies (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2023), and strategic adaptability (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005) in ensuring the sustainability of these ventures (Liu et al., 2022; Noh, 2020).

7.1 Strategic Resources and Their Contextual Importance

Findings confirm that natural (Bunting et al., 2013; Nguyen et al., 2024) and economic resources (Yang et al., 2021) are the most critical for gaining a competitive advantage (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2023). However, their strategic importance is dynamic and contextual, shifting based on the enterprise's life cycle stage and external pressures.

Nature's Nest and NV Eco Farm initially depended on natural resources (Butler & Hinch, 2007; D'Arcy & Deveau, 2012) but later focused on economic (Hall & Page, 2020) and human resources (Russo & Richards, 2020) to ensure long-term viability. Wilderdest transitioned from a social resource (Kulshreshtha & Kulshreshtha, 2019) - dependent model to an innovation-driven model, expanding employment beyond the immediate community. It later grew its unit so large that the importance of social capital (Kuhzady et al., 2020) diminished, whereas Aangan, as a model, did not become sustainable or grow beyond its initial phase and remained highly dependent on social capital. Had the business model become independent, the locals would not have been

able to disrupt Aangan's activities. Tanshikar Spice Farm, through generational knowledge, combined natural, economic, and human resources to sustain growth. Aangan's failure highlights that social resources alone cannot ensure sustainability without economic and institutional support.

7.2. Institutional Arrangements vs. Vulnerability Context

Institutional arrangements (Kolawole et al., 2023; Mikulcak, 2015), including government regulations, policy interventions, and bureaucratic inefficiencies, were found to be more constraining than external vulnerabilities (Hampton et al., 2018; Onur et al., 2018; Shen et al., 2008) like seasonality and climate change.

Nature's Nest struggled with government policies (Tamnar power project) more than seasonal fluctuations. Wildernest faced land-use restrictions that limited expansion. Aangan's business was affected more by government incentives discouraging participation than by external market factors. NV Eco Farm and Tanshikar Spice Farm, despite economic volatility, benefited from their ability to shift focus to sustainable farming during COVID-19.

COVID-19 was an exceptional vulnerability of unprecedented proportions, but research suggests such pandemics occur roughly once in a century. Businesses with diversified models (NV Eco Farm, Tanshikar) adapted effectively, while others (Aangan, Nature's Nest, Wildernest) faced severe disruptions.

7.3 Strategy Selection and Business Sustainability

The type of strategy used in response to resource constraints directly impacted business sustainability.

Deliberate strategies (Calle-Vaquero et al., 2021; Richards & Munsters, 2010) ensured long-term resilience (Wildernest's product innovation, Nature's Nest's conservation approach, Tanshikar's integration of agro-tourism). Emergent strategies (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005) helped businesses adapt to market changes (NV Eco Farm's addition of guest amenities, Nature's Nest introducing air-conditioning). Ad hoc strategies (Mintzberg, 1994), while useful for short-term survival,

were insufficient for sustained success (Aangan's reliance on temporary solutions like SHGs and tourism shutdown during COVID-19).

Enterprises that aligned their strategy type with the nature of the challenge achieved better sustainability outcomes, while those that relied excessively on short-term fixes struggled.

7.4 Resource Categorization and Strategic Sensitivity:

While some non-strategic resources (e.g., local seasonal staff or limited facilities) posed short-term challenges, they did not critically alter the long-term sustainability trajectory if core strategic resources were secure. However, when both strategic and non-strategic resources were affected simultaneously by institutional or environmental pressures (as in the case of Aangan), the enterprises struggled to sustain competitive advantage.

The study highlights that peripheral tourism enterprises must strategically align their resource management with external conditions to sustain operations. *Social entrepreneurship, deliberate planning, and adaptive strategies are crucial for overcoming institutional and vulnerability-related challenges. The Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT) proposed in this research provides a strategic lens for evaluating resource-based challenges, selecting appropriate coping strategies, and ensuring long-term competitiveness.*

Chapter 8

Research Contributions & Implications

8.1 Research Contributions

8.1.1 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes significant theoretical contributions by integrating the Resource-Based View (Barney, 1991), Mintzberg's Strategic Framework (Mintzberg, 1978), and the Sustainable Livelihood Framework for Tourism (Yang et al., 2021) to develop a Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT) that addresses the strategic challenges of peripheral tourism enterprises.

(i) Extending Resource-Based View (RBV) in Peripheral Tourism Context

While RBV primarily focuses on identifying valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources for competitive advantage (Barney, 1991), this study advances RBV by demonstrating that resource importance is dynamic and influenced by institutional arrangements (Kolawole et al., 2023; Mikulcak, 2015) and vulnerability contexts (Hampton et al., 2018; Onur et al., 2018). It introduces the idea that natural (Butler & Hinch, 2007; D'Arcy & Deveau, 2012) and economic (Hall & Page, 2020) resources are initially critical, but as businesses evolve, human (Russo & Richards, 2020) and social (Kulshreshtha & Kulshreshtha, 2019) resources also become strategic differentiators. The study further contextualises RBV within social entrepreneurship (Radu and Chiriac, 2019; Gassner and Friedl, 2021), showing that community engagement (Chen et al., 2018; Nofiyanti & Pradhipta, 2021) can be a strategic resource when managed effectively.

(ii) Bridging Strategy Literature with Peripheral Tourism Challenges

The study applies Mintzberg's Strategic Framework (deliberate, emergent, and ad hoc strategies) to analyse how peripheral tourism enterprises cope with resource constraints (Dees, 1998; Sathiyaseelan et al., 2024). It extends strategic

management theory (Mintzberg, 1994) by demonstrating that deliberate strategies (Harfst & Wust, 2023; Prats & Guia, 2016) are most effective for managing strategic resources, while emergent (Deswandi, 2017; Atun et al., 2019) and ad hoc strategies (Mintzberg, 1994) are useful for short-term adaptation but insufficient for long-term sustainability. The findings highlight that the type of strategy chosen directly influences business viability, reinforcing the role of strategic adaptability (Alvarez-Garcia et al., 2018; Jones, 2005) in tourism enterprises.

(iii) Refinement of SLFT for Enterprise-Level Analysis

Traditional SLFT focuses on livelihood outcomes at the community level (Aazami and Shanazi, 2020), but this study adapts it to an enterprise-level framework by examining how institutional arrangements (Kolawole et al., 2023; Mikulcak, 2015) and vulnerability contexts (Amoah et al., 2023; Ramli et al., 2022) shape business sustainability. By incorporating internal (resource quality) and external (institutional arrangements, market forces) factors, the study provides a more comprehensive approach to assessing peripheral tourism enterprises.

(iv) Development of the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)

This study proposes SBFT, a multidimensional framework that integrates RBV, SLFT, and Mintzberg's strategic approaches to provide a holistic model for business sustainability in peripheral tourism. SBFT helps in identifying strategic resources (Barney, 1991; Dees, 1998; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000), recognising challenges arising from institutional and vulnerability contexts, and selecting appropriate strategies to sustain tourism enterprises. The framework provides an analytical tool for academicians, policymakers, and tourism entrepreneurs to evaluate and enhance the sustainability of peripheral tourism enterprises.

By synthesising these theoretical perspectives, this research advances strategic tourism management and provides a new lens for understanding sustainable business models in peripheral tourism.

8.1.2 Practical Implications

This study provides valuable insights for tourism entrepreneurs, policymakers, and stakeholders involved in the development and management of peripheral tourism enterprises. It bridges the gap between theoretical frameworks and real-world tourism business challenges, offering practical guidance for sustainable tourism growth in peripheral regions.

(i) Strategic Resource Management for Peripheral Tourism Enterprises

Entrepreneurs in peripheral tourism must identify and prioritise strategic resources at different stages of business growth. The study emphasises that natural and economic resources are critical in the early stages, while human and social resources become essential for long-term sustainability. Businesses should periodically reassess their resource dependencies and adjust their strategies to maintain competitive advantage (Sixaba & Rogerson, 2023).

(ii) Selection of Appropriate Strategies for Business Sustainability

Deliberate strategies (long-term planning, innovation, and market positioning) are most effective for managing core strategic resources. Emergent strategies (flexible adaptations) help businesses respond to changing market conditions and tourist preferences. Ad hoc strategies are useful for short-term crisis management (e.g., COVID-19 response) but should not replace structured long-term planning. Entrepreneurs must align their strategy type with the nature of resource constraints to ensure sustainability.

(iii) Navigating Institutional arrangements and Policy Frameworks

Institutional arrangements (e.g., land use restrictions, bureaucratic delays, policy inconsistencies) pose significant challenges for peripheral tourism enterprises. Entrepreneurs should engage with local governments, tourism boards, and regulatory agencies to advocate for supportive policies and access to funding. Government agencies should consider simplified approval processes and incentive structures to promote sustainable tourism development (Shoeb-Ur-Rahman et al., 2020).

(iv) Enhancing Community Engagement and Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship (Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2019) models can enhance community participation (Chhetri & Arrowsmith, 2020), local employment (Deswandi, 2017; Atun et al., 2019), and cultural preservation (Porter et al, 2017). However, this study demonstrates that over-reliance on social resources without economic sustainability can lead to business failure, as seen in Aangan's case. Entrepreneurs must design inclusive, yet independent models where community involvement is encouraged but does not solely dictate business viability.

(v) Resilience Planning for Peripheral Tourism Enterprises

External vulnerabilities like seasonality, climate risks, and pandemics require businesses to develop resilience plans. Enterprises like NV Eco Farm and Tanshikar Spice Farm successfully diversified into sustainable farming, ensuring economic stability during the COVID-19 crisis. Entrepreneurs should explore alternative revenue streams, such as agro-tourism (Ammirato et al., 2020; Malkanthi & Routray, 2012), heritage tourism (Geçikli et al., 2024), or digital tourism initiatives (Ammirato et al., 2022), to reduce dependence on a single market segment.

(vi) Application of the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT)

The SBFT framework provides a structured approach for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and tourism planners to assess business sustainability. It helps identify resource constraints, evaluate institutional and vulnerability contexts, and select the most effective strategies for long-term growth. The framework can be used as a decision-making tool for both new and existing peripheral tourism enterprises to enhance business resilience and competitiveness.

8.1.3 Policy Implications

This study provides key policy recommendations to support the sustainable growth of peripheral tourism enterprises:

- (i) Simplifying Regulatory Frameworks – Streamlining licensing, land use permissions, and funding access can reduce bureaucratic hurdles and encourage entrepreneurship in peripheral tourism.
- (ii) Incentivizing Sustainable Tourism – Offering tax benefits, subsidies, and grants for eco-friendly initiatives can promote responsible tourism practices.
- (iii) Strengthening Institutional Support – Establishing dedicated tourism support centres and public-private partnerships can enhance business viability.
- (iv) Encouraging Community-Based Tourism – Policies should foster structured community participation while ensuring enterprises remain independent to avoid disruptions.
- (v) Developing Crisis Resilience Strategies – Governments should introduce contingency plans and financial safety nets to help peripheral tourism businesses withstand external shocks like pandemics.

8.2 Managerial Implications

This study provides actionable insights for tourism entrepreneurs and managers to enhance business sustainability in peripheral tourism enterprises:

- (i) Strategic Resource Allocation – Managers should identify and prioritise natural and economic resources in the early stages, while gradually strengthening human and social resources for long-term growth.
- (ii) Choosing the Right Strategies – Deliberate strategies should be used for managing strategic resources, while emergent and ad hoc strategies should be applied to adapt to market shifts and temporary challenges.
- (iii) Diversification for Business Resilience – Enterprises should develop alternative revenue streams (e.g., agro-tourism, digital tourism) to mitigate risks associated with seasonality and economic downturns.
- (iv) Engaging with Institutional Arrangements – Managers must proactively navigate government regulations and policies, engage with tourism boards, and leverage available incentives to minimise institutional barriers.
- (v) Sustaining Community Participation – While social capital is important, enterprises should structure their business models to remain independent from excessive local reliance, preventing disruptions due to internal conflicts.

- (vi) Crisis Preparedness and Adaptability – Managers should develop contingency plans for unforeseen challenges, as seen during COVID-19 (Sengel *et al.*, 2020), ensuring business continuity through strategic adaptation (Buhalis, 2025).

8.3 Limitations and Avenues for future research

While this study provides valuable insights into the sustainability of peripheral tourism enterprises, it has the limitations of 'Time-Bound Analysis'. The study captures findings within a specific time frame and does not account for longitudinal study in peripheral tourism enterprises. Despite these limitations, the study provides a strong foundation for future research on sustainable business strategies in peripheral tourism enterprises.

These further research areas can be explored:

- (i) Quantitative Validation – Empirical studies using quantitative methods and larger datasets can strengthen the statistical validity of findings on resource constraints and strategic decision-making.
- (ii) Comparative Studies Across Regions – Future research can examine peripheral tourism enterprises in different geographic locations to assess the generalizability of the Sustainable Business Framework for Tourism (SBFT).
- (iii) SBFT – validation of the framework across sectors. Through researchers have termed it as sustainable business framework for tourism enterprises, we believe this framework can be used across all sectors (non-tourism enterprises and in various natures of business-like services and manufacturing)
- (iv) Policy Impact Assessment – Research assessing the effectiveness of government policies and tourism incentives in supporting peripheral tourism enterprises can offer valuable insights for policymakers.
- (v) Crisis Management and Resilience Strategies – Studies focusing on post-pandemic recovery models and crisis preparedness strategies can enhance the ability of peripheral tourism enterprises to withstand future disruptions.

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Annexure

- A. List of Respondents
- B. Papers Published

Annexure A: List of Respondents

1) Respondents for Nature's Nest

S.No	Name of the interviewee	Demographic information	Length of the interview conducted
1	Pankaj Lad	Male, 40 yrs, Masters in Geology, Promoter of the Unit studied, Designation - Director	Personal interviews - July 2019 (face to face interview) & 5 th Feb 2021 (through google meet due to Covid19) of 2hrs each. Personal visits to the unit - June 2012, Sept 2014, November 2017, July 2019, December 2022 and Feb 2023. Overnight stays in 2012 and 2014 to get first hand experience of the unit and facilitate
2	Gaurish Lad	Male, 42 yrs, Engineer, Brother of Pankaj Lad who left the business later	Personal interview - July 2012 of 30 minutes
3	Ramesh Zharmekar	Male, 38 yrs, Graduate, Director	Personal Interview - Sept 2014, July 2019 of 40 minutes each
4	Abhijeet	Male, 29 yrs, Graduate, Manager	Telephonic conversation - 31st Oct 2022 - 40 mins. Whatsapp conversations 2nd and 13th Nov 2022. Personal interview 17th December 2022 and 25th Feb 2023 - 1 hr each at the unit in Mollem
5	Helpers	Males - 2 of them approximately 20 yrs each	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
6	Cook	Female, 35 yrs.	Personal Communication - 35 minutes
7	Villagers	Interaction with around 15 villagers (Males and Females both) staying in the nearby houses, during the village	Approximately 15-20 minutes per person. Being publicity shy, personal names could not be documented

2) Respondents for Aangan

S.No	Name of the interviewee	Demographic information	Length of the interview conducted
1	Parag Rangnekar	Male, 48 yrs, State Coordinator for Goa in the Indian Bird Conservation Network and founding President of the Goa Bird Conservation Network. The Brain behind Aangan and engaged as an environmental consultant by MSFG.	Personal interviews -13th Sept 2021 & 5th Oct 2021 (through google meet due to Covid19) of 2hrs each. Day visitation to the unit - March 2013, November 2017 & Mar 2022. Overnight stay in March 2013 to get first hand experience of the unit and facilitate interaction with villagers.
2	Shivdas Desai	Male, 38 yrs, Accounts Head at MSFG	Conversations through whatsapp on the following dates: December 2019, November 2021, February 2022, March 2022
3	Dayanand Gaonkar	Handling accounts for Aangan after MSFG moved out.	Whatsapp conversations 11th, 12th and 15th of March and 12th May 2022.
4	Gajanan Bhau and Family	Home-stay at the house of this family at Aangan in March 2013	First hand immersive experience of the unit, residents' life style, stay, food habits, festival (there was a village festival during the overnight stay) etc. for 2 nights and 3 days.
5	10 Villagers from the SHG	Females all - involved in providing food during the day visit.	Personal Communication - 15 minutes with each of them. Being publicity shy, personal names could not be documented
6	10 other Villagers	These villagers were involved in strawberry plantation and were members from other home stays	Approximately 15-20 minutes per person. Being publicity shy, personal names could not be documented
7	Guide	18 year old , Education-12th std	Personal Interview of 1 hr - March 2013

3) Respondents for Wildernest

S.No	Name of the interviewee	Demographic information	Length of the interview conducted
1	Captain Nitin Dhond	Male, 64 yrs, Merchant Navy Captain (from T. S. Rajendra Naval academy in 1977-78), Promoter of the Unit studied, Designation - Managing Director	Personal interviews - 7th and 8th of February 2021 (through google meet due to Covid19) of 2hrs each. Personal visits to the unit - June 2013 (overnight stay to get first hand experience of the unit) and day visitation in October 2019
2	Sudhir Naik	Male, 40 yrs, Masters in Business Administration (Finance); Presently - Director Finance at Wildernest	In continuous communication from 2013 till date over the phone, email and whatsapp
3	Nirmal Kulkarni	Male, 46 yrs, A Bachelor in Applied Art from the Goa College of Art, and a Masters in Environment and Ecology from the Indian Institute of Environment and Ecology, New Delhi. Director - Ecology	Availability difficult due to work engagements, hence just a few telecon conversations in 2021
4	Helpers in the kitchen	Females - 4 of them approximately 22 yrs each	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
5	Room Boys	Males, approximately 22-25 yrs, 15 of them.	Personal Communication - with only 2 of 15 minutes each

4) Respondents for NV Eco farm

S.No	Name of the inter	Demographic information	Length of the interview conducted
1	Mahesh Patil	Male, 55 yrs. Graduation in Agriculture, MBA in Finance, Marketing and Management at Goa Institute of Management. Additional fellowship through Rockefeller Institute. Presently- Chairman Goa State Pollution Control Board. Other positions - Expert member on GCZMA (Goa Coastal Zone Management Authority), Member on Goa State Expert Appraisal committee, Former Head Sustainability Sesa Goa Ltd, Sustainability Consultant, Founder member and Director- NV Ecofarm.	Personal interviews - 17th April 2021 (face to face interview) & 7th February 2021 (through google meet due to Covid19) of 2hrs each. Day visitation at the farm was in 2021. Day visitation helped understand resident's daily life, their interactions with other people in the village, their ways of participating in tourism, their engagement in other livelihoods, and their operations. All the observations were recorded.
2	Smita Patil	Female, 52 yrs, Graduate, Ex-Banker, Wife of Mahesh Patil	Telephonic interview - 2021 of 15 minutes
3	Santosh Shetkar	Male, 60 yrs, Education - 10th Std. Villager-from Dabal, personally known to Mahesh. Speaks English and the local language. Serves as the Manager.	Personal Interview of 1 hour- 2021 during day visit to the farm
4	Receptionist	Female - Approximately 20 yrs	Personal Conversation - 30 minutes. She managed to sell a lot of organic products during that conversation! Excellent at sales.
5	Cook	Female - Approximately 60 yrs each	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes
6	Helper	Male - Aged 20	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
7	Tourists	2 males and 2 females at the site	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
8	Villagers	Interaction with around 6 villagers (Males and Females - both) staying in the nearby houses, during the village visits.	Approximately 15-20 minutes per person. Being publicity shy, personal names could not be documented

5) Respondents for Tanshikar Spice Farm

S.No	Name of the interviewee	Demographic information	Length of the interview conducted
1	Chinmay Tanshikar	Male, 49 yrs, Graduate in Commerce, Promoter of the Unit studied, Designation - Owner/Proprietor	Personal interviews - 2017 & 2018 (face to face interview) & 2nd May 2021 (through google meet due to Covid19) of 2hrs each. Stay at Tanshikar spice farm was in October 2014, followed by day visitations in 2017, 2018 and 2022. Day visitations helped understand resident's daily life, their interactions with other people in the village, their ways of participating in tourism, their engagement in other livelihoods, and their operations. All the observations were recorded.
2	Gauri Tanshikar	Female, 42 yrs, Graduate, Wife of Chinmay Tanshikar	Personal interview - 2018 of 40 minutes
3	Shivanand	Male, 32 yrs, Manager, appointed in 2022	Personal Interview of 20 minutes- 2022 during day visit to the farm
4	Shanti Naik	Female Guide - Graduate in environmental sciences. Appointed -2022	Personal Interview of 30 minutes- 2022 during day visit to the farm
5	Cooks	Females - 2 of them approximately 45 yrs each	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
6	Helpers	Males - 2 of them, one aged 50, other 20	Personal conversation 15-20 minutes each
7	Villagers	Interaction with around 10 villagers (Males and Females both) staying in the nearby houses, during the village visits.	Approximately 15-20 minutes per person. Being publicity shy, personal names could not be documented

Annexure B: Research Publications

Research Article

- Decisive Moments at Emerald Lawns: Manoj Joshi's Dilemma (2024) in the journal "Asian Case Research Journal" (Emerald Publication. SCOPUS Indexed)
- Capacity Building as a Revitalization Strategy for a Community-Based Tourism Project (2025) in the journal "South Asian Journal of Management" (UGC Care)

Book Chapter

- Peripheral Tourism: Challenges & Coping Strategies (2019) in Rurality, Ruralism and Rural Tourism- Challenges and Coping Strategies Eds Sumedha Agarwal, Aditya Ranjan, Vijay Kumar Dev, Nimit Chowdhary, ANE Books Pvt Ltd, ISBN: 978-93-89212-33-4

Conference Presentation

- Presented paper at the International Conference on Rurality, Ruralism and Rural Tourism – Challenges and Coping Strategies, organized by Jamia Milia Islamia, Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, New Delhi on the topic "Peripheral Tourism: Challenges and Coping Strategies." 15th – 17th November 2018
- Presented paper at the International Conference on Innovations and Sustainable Practices in Commerce, Management and Social Sciences: Future Prospects and Challenges (ICCMSS Virtual – 2021), organized by Maniben Nanavati Women's College, Mumbai and IRA, Jaipur on the topic "Peripheral Tourism – Sustaining the Sustainable Business". 4th & 5th June 2021.
- Presented paper at the 3rd Asia Pacific International Religious Tourism and Pilgrimage Conference [APIRTP] organized by R.M. Salgaocar College,

Nuvm, Goa on the topic “Evaluating the Feasibility of the Ekadasha Teertha Circuit in Goa’s Peripheral Tourism Strategy”.15th-17th January 2025.