

# Hidden in Plain Sight: Exploring Unnoticed Local Tourism Around Bangalore and the Need for Healthier Travel Practices.

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**Abstract** - Many people view travel as a means of unwinding, exploring, and making connections with new locations. Bangalore is well-known for its exciting city life and popular tourist attractions, but many beautiful and important places are still unnoticed. These include rural areas like small hills, lakes, and historical sites that have a lot of tourism potential but are seldom visited or promoted. The main goal of this study is to determine why these local tourist attractions in Bangalore are still undiscovered and how healthier and more responsible travel practices can help promote them. In order to comprehend public awareness, regional difficulties, and community viewpoints, the study makes use of surveys, interviews, field trips, and previously published tourism reports. The results indicate that the majority of people are not aware of these locations because of their low online visibility, few transportation options, dearth of basic amenities, and low level of community involvement. A field visit to a local destination was conducted as part of the study, where existing conditions were observed, photographs were taken, and conversations with locals were held. The study emphasizes the importance of "healthy tourism," which is travel organized to protect the environment, help the local population, and prevent damage and crowding. These undiscovered locations can be investigated in a fair and sustainable manner by raising awareness, fostering community involvement, and encouraging responsible travel.

**Keywords:** Sustainable tourism, responsible travel, local tourism development, undiscovered destinations, community participation, environmental conservation

## INTRODUCTION

Travel helps regions grow, keeps traditions alive, while boosting local economies. Lately, more people have begun choosing quiet, real places immersed in nature rather than busy tourist spots. Because of that change, small towns and countryside get noticed now - though plenty still struggle being unseen, hard to reach, or poorly shared. Rough roads, lack of info, weak outreach leave many cut off despite their charm. Karnataka stands out across India for its mix of old temples, green hills, forests, villages - all packed into one state

Still, progress in the state's travel sector spreads unevenly. Though big spots stay in the spotlight, quieter corners get missed - blocked by tough access, missing basics, thin services, weak outreach (K Y & P, 2021) Around Bangalore, city-centered trips dominate, leaving nearby places hidden from view. Out of balance, yet unchanged

Spreading tourism's rewards more evenly across Karnataka is the aim behind pushing nature-focused trips, village stays, and locally run experiences under the 2020-25 policy plan. Yet research reveals a gap - what officials intend often fails to take root, especially in countryside regions where people do not have access to proper guidance or resources needed to manage visitors well.

One study shows that careless tourist growth harms nature yet brings little money to local people in Karnataka (Vikrama, 2022; Rai & Sreedhara, 2022). Because of this, experts push for a different path - travel that respects ecosystems, involves residents directly. It's about drawing guests without draining resources or skipping fairness. This approach values balance: care for land, fair roles for locals, future gains over quick wins.

Though more studies now look at travel and green growth in Karnataka, few dig into overlooked spots close to Bangalore. Hidden corners stay hidden - this work explores why. What keeps visitors away gets unpacked here. Local charm often goes unnoticed; reasons pile up from access to awareness. Some places suffer not from lack of beauty but from silence in stories told. Attention shifts toward what shapes their fade, then how light might return. Quiet sites hold value - even if maps ignore them. Barriers come in many forms: transport gaps, digital absence, weak upkeep. Each factor plays a role, though rarely alone. Solutions emerge when communities guide the steps forward. Growth can happen without harm - if rhythm stays local. Ideas take root slowly, like seeds in cracked stone. Small changes may shift attention where it's long been missing. Seeing anew begins by listening first.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

People now see travel that respects nature and people as vital for villages far from cities. Ivona wrote about this in 2021, explaining it is more than just saving trees or animals - true care means lifting up daily life there, keeping traditions alive, involving residents directly. Remote places brim with unique culture and scenery yet rarely gain much from tourist traffic, mostly because standard tour setups ignore what locals can offer or need. Success comes only when money matters, earth concerns, and human aspects get equal attention at once instead of being split apart - balance helps guests and hosts alike last longer. Ideas like these matter strongly near fast-growing towns such as Bangalore, where quiet spots nearby might rise gently into view without losing their soul if managed with care (Ivona, 2021).

### 2.1 Challenges in Promoting Lesser-Known Destinations

It's hard for quiet travel spots to get attention because big places have more money, plus better reach. Local shops, town leaders, and tourism teams working together tend to stand out more than going it alone. When people pool what they know, spread messages as a group, and team up on guest experiences, things start to click - Perkins, Khoo-Lattimore, and Arcodia showed this in 2021. Acting as one web instead of separate bits cuts expenses, lifts everyone's profile, while trust grows slowly through joint effort. Alone, small places around Bangalore often fade into the background. Yet when they link up, visibility grows without anyone shouting louder. Think of it like neighbors sharing tools instead of each buying their own. Efforts multiply when locals shape the path, not just follow it. Sustainability slips in naturally when decisions come from within. Shared energy turns overlooked corners into destinations worth noticing. This quiet teamwork fits well with long-term travel balance in areas rarely highlighted. (Perkins et al., 2021)

Figuring out why certain spots stay off the radar begins with examining traveler habits when picking locations. Studies reveal people tend to narrow options by choosing places they recognize, can easily reach, or see advertised frequently (Ryan & Cave, 2003). Put plainly, a location might boast stunning landscapes or rich heritage - yet still miss crowds due to lack of visibility in guidebooks, websites, or TV coverage. As time passes, popular attractions gather more spotlight while hidden gems fade further into silence, no matter their true worth. With each passing season, familiarity wins over discovery, shaping paths most never think to leave. Hidden gems near Bangalore often go unnoticed because how they're viewed matters more than what they actually offer. Seeing them as worth visiting isn't automatic - it depends on awareness and image. Improving roads or rest areas helps, yet without shifting mindsets, few will come. Recognition starts

long before arrival, shaped by stories, impressions, glimpses. What people believe about a place can outweigh its real features. Making spots known means shaping those beliefs carefully. Ryan and Cave noted this back in 2003 - being seen is half the battle.

### 2.2 The Role of Digital Technology in Tourism Promotion

Nowadays, finding places to visit works completely different, thanks mainly to tech shaping how info spreads. Khazinatul Khaeriah and Zarkasih showed in 2026[] that apps, web ads, and smart planning tools shift how travelers see certain spots. Instead of just showing up, tourists get updates on demand, move around using live maps, even receive custom tips during trips. Being visible online helps locations stand out - no longer relying only on word-of-mouth or brochures. Yet some areas still fall behind, particularly those without strong internet access or trained staff. Even when tools exist, weak teamwork across agencies blocks smooth adoption. Small towns might know what's needed but face hurdles putting plans into motion. Digital progress isn't automatic - it needs support, training, steady effort. This matches what quiet getaways near Bangalore deal with - spotty web coverage and little attention online keeps them off most traveler radars. Pairing tech tools with local voices might lift these places up, letting them stand out without chasing crowds. Mobile phones now shape how people move through new areas, not only guiding steps but spotlighting spots needing care. One 2026 paper from Sharma[] digs into app use, location signals, and handheld travel systems across India, showing shifts in choices when info flows fast. Findings show unseen corners gain notice when details pop up instantly, maps respond, and visitor-shared snaps circulate. Still, gaps remain - remote locations rarely link into these networks, missing listings even if charm runs deep. Out of sight often means out of mind for small tourist sites near Bangalore. When online presence fades, so does visitor interest. Mobile tools that anyone can use might just shift the balance. People who live nearby adding photos or stories helps visibility grow slowly. Attention builds when locals take part without pressure. Quiet places gain space to breathe instead of being overrun. Growth happens differently when tech serves culture rather than replaces it.

Digital communication has become essential in how tourism destinations are discovered today. Fianto and Andrianto (2022) explain that tools such as social media and websites help destinations share information, attract visitors, and communicate sustainability values. However, their study also points out that many smaller or lesser-known destinations struggle to use these digital platforms effectively, which limits their online visibility. This is relevant to local tourism spots around Bangalore, where weak digital communication often causes destinations to remain unnoticed despite having

tourism potential. Improving digital communication at the local level can therefore support better visibility and healthier tourism development (Fianto & Andrianto, 2022)

### 2.3 Healthy and sustainable tourism

Looking into how people travel shows a pattern some might miss. When travelers learn what sustainable tourism really means, they often start making different choices. Not just about where to go but why it matters. One research effort pointed out something clear: knowing helps. Travelers who see value in protecting nature and supporting communities tend to pick trips aligned with those ideas. Especially during times when wide-open spaces mattered most, like recent global shifts showed. Places far from crowds became favorites almost overnight. That change revealed a deeper point about motivation too. Feeling good about ethical travel seems linked to wanting better outcomes for everyone involved. In areas near Bangalore, plenty of spots stay off common maps despite their quiet charm. Shifting attention there may depend on messaging that connects personal wellness with care for surroundings. Awareness builds slowly, yet even small nudges can redirect paths taken by many. Less popular trails gain meaning once seen through fresh eyes. Decisions then follow new priorities instead of habit alone (Santos-Roldán et al., 2020).

Lately, studies have begun seeing tourism less about moving from place to place, instead focusing on how it might boost health for communities and landscapes alike. Backed by a 2024 paper published in Sustainability, evidence shows protecting nature thrives when eco-conscious trips shape the core of journeys taken (Sustainable Tourism Research, 2024). Visitors aware of long-term impacts tend to pick spots where being there helps residents, not harms them. Because of this growing awareness, travel now links closely with well-being - where movement feeds the body, society, environment. Experiences matter more than checklists; staying matters more than passing through. Away from Bangalore's busy spots, quiet destinations might shine if they highlight what makes them different. Not chasing crowds but offering depth, these places appeal to travelers wanting more than a quick snapshot. When care for nature shapes how a place welcomes guests, it draws those looking to connect without harm. Meaningful visits grow where local life stays central, not sidelined for convenience. Travel slows down here, favoring presence over checklist ticking. Healthier exploration often begins where noise fades and attention deepens. A location's true character emerges when profit isn't the loudest voice. Visitors arrive seeking calm, stay because respect is visible. Responsibility becomes part of the journey, quietly built into each choice. These corners thrive by being themselves, not mimicking popular trends.

### 2.4 Research Gap

Existing studies clearly explain the importance of sustainable tourism, collaboration among local stakeholders, digital visibility, and the growing link between tourism and personal well-being. Research has shown how awareness, technology, and ethical motivations influence travel choices, and how quieter destinations can benefit when these elements are thoughtfully applied. However, most of this research looks at tourism either at a broad regional or national level, or focuses on individual aspects such as sustainability, digital tools, or tourist behavior in isolation. There is limited research that brings these ideas together to understand why lesser-known local destinations near rapidly growing cities like Bangalore continue to remain unnoticed. In particular, few studies examine how awareness, digital communication, collaboration, and healthy tourism values interact in shaping visibility and travel choices at the local level. This study addresses that gap by focusing specifically on unnoticed tourism spots around Bangalore and exploring how healthy, community-oriented tourism practices can support their sustainable and balanced promotion.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Approach

This research follows a descriptive and exploratory approach, focusing on understanding why several local tourism destinations around Bangalore remain unnoticed and how healthier tourism practices could help change this. The study does not aim to measure tourism through complex statistics but instead tries to observe patterns, perceptions, and real experiences related to local travel. A mixed-method approach was used, combining simple quantitative inputs with qualitative observations, as this method is commonly used in tourism studies to capture both trends and lived experiences (Creswell, 2014). This approach allowed the research to remain flexible and grounded in actual conditions rather than relying only on theoretical assumptions.

### 3.2 Study Area and Selection of Locations

The study focuses on lesser-known tourism locations in the vicinity of Bangalore, particularly places that are geographically close to the city yet remain outside mainstream tourist attention. These locations were chosen because they represent a contrast between accessibility and invisibility. Selection was based on factors such as proximity to Bangalore, natural or cultural significance, and the absence of organized tourism promotion. The intention was to understand why such places, despite having potential, are often overlooked in favor of more popular destinations.

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

#### 3.3.1 Field Visits and On-Site Observation

A major part of this research involved visiting selected lesser-known tourism locations around Bangalore. These visits helped in understanding the real condition of these places beyond what is shown online or described in reports. During each visit, observations were made regarding accessibility, road conditions, availability of signboards, cleanliness, basic facilities, and the overall atmosphere of the location. Visitor movement and the general level of activity were also noted. These on-site observations provided first-hand insight into why certain destinations remain unnoticed despite having natural or cultural appeal.

#### 3.3.2 Informal Interactions and Local Insights

Along with observation, informal conversations were held with visitors, local residents, and small vendors wherever possible. These discussions were kept casual rather than structured, allowing people to speak freely about how they discovered the place, their reasons for visiting, and the challenges faced by locals in supporting tourism. Such interactions helped capture personal perspectives and everyday experiences that are often missed in formal surveys.

#### 3.3.3 Surveys and Awareness Checks

Simple survey questions were used to understand awareness levels and travel preferences related to local tourism around Bangalore. The surveys focused on how people usually discover destinations, their preference for crowded versus quieter places, and their awareness of nearby local tourism spots. This helped identify common patterns in travel behavior and information sources.

#### 3.3.4 Use of Secondary Sources

To support and compare the primary data, secondary information was collected from academic articles, tourism reports, online travel platforms, and digital maps. These sources were used to understand how the selected destinations are represented digitally and in official tourism material. Comparing online visibility with on-ground observations helped highlight gaps between perception and reality.

#### 3.4 Data Interpretation and Ethical Considerations

The collected information was interpreted by identifying recurring patterns and themes such as lack of awareness, weak digital presence, limited infrastructure, and absence of coordinated promotion. Survey responses were reviewed using simple percentage-based analysis, while qualitative inputs from observations and interactions were grouped thematically. Ethical considerations were maintained

throughout the study by ensuring voluntary participation and avoiding the collection of personal or sensitive data. The research was conducted with respect toward local communities, aiming to represent destinations honestly without exaggeration or misinterpretation.

To visually represent the disparities observed between mainstream and lesser-known destinations, a comparative visibility assessment was conducted using four core indicators: digital presence, public awareness, infrastructure support, and visitor footfall. These indicators were rated on a five-point scale based on survey responses and field observations. The results are presented in Figure 1.

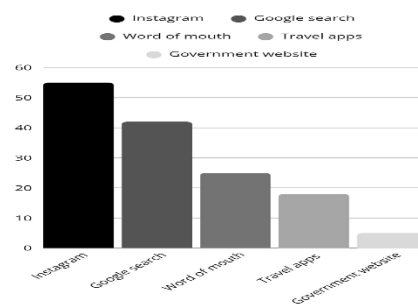


Figure 1: Comparative Tourism Visibility Indicators Between Popular and Unnoticed Destinations

### FINDINGS

#### 4.1 LIMITED VISIBILITY OF NEARBY TOURISM DESTINATIONS

According to the research, there are many tourist destinations less than 6 hours from Bangalore that are very appealing but currently go unnoticed. They have a lot of natural beauty, cultural value, and provide tranquility and relaxation, but they generally do not come up in conversations or travel plans. The problem lies not in the appeal of the destination but in the lack of exposure/marketing.

##### 4.1.1 Low Digital Presence

According to most survey respondents, they primarily locate travel destinations by searching on Google, looking at Instagram, watching YouTube videos, and reading travel blogs. If a destination doesn't appear in a lot of these areas, most people will not include it as an option when planning their next trip. In today's world, an established online presence is essential to help gain and keep attention; that's why lesser known or smaller tourist spots tend to not be included as options when it comes to travel because they do not have a substantial digital presence. People like to travel to places that already have a lot of attention; being familiar creates a trust in them and excitement; therefore, people will

repeatedly select a location that is well-known. As a result, there will be many undiscovered attractions in Bangalore.

#### 4.2 INSIGHTS OBTAINED THROUGH SITE VISITS.

In person, we got an actual feel for this type of location outside the city of Bangalore. This provided us with first hand information on how things are done. Basic Services; while we were there, we observed no shops, restaurants, or nearby food options. Bathrooms or visitor areas were not available or very rudimentary. Due to this lack of service, it is easy to see why people are reluctant to remain long at this type of attraction or stay there the entire day. Few people visited, so there were no visitors and many areas seemed to be completely devoid of other people. Although this made it an almost natural site, there is no doubt about the fact that it has been undervisited and that the spot is under promoted.

##### 4.2.1 Neglect and Management

There are numerous instances of neglect throughout the site with limited signage and difficult-to-read signage, and overall site upkeep appeared to be limited as well. According to Vikrama (2022), infrastructure and service deficiencies are common in rural tourism locations in Karnataka.

#### 4.3 ENGAGEMENT WITH LOCALS

When visiting the location, we spoke informally with some residents to get their perspective.

##### 4.3.1 Sense of Lack of Usefulness to Residents

Those with whom we spoke expressed pride in their area's historical and natural features, but that they received no recognition from the authorities or tourists. They had a strong sense that the area has been neglected and that it has significant potential to attract lots of visitors.

##### 4.3.2 Limited Economic Benefit to Local Residents

The people we spoke with noted that if the area was developed for tourism in a thoughtful manner, more jobs would be created and small local businesses would benefit. Ivona (2021) supports this idea by arguing that rural tourism could contribute positively to local economic development if the community is engaged as a stakeholder.

##### 4.3.3 Difficulties Related to Commuting to a Destination

In general, public transportation systems are limited, particularly in places where individuals do not have their own vehicles. As a result, those who do not own vehicles face a very large challenge in travelling comfortably to a location. Long stretches of the roads to a location were often in poor shape, making the travel to that location a negative and tiring experience.

#### 4.3.4 Institutional Insufficient Wayfinding and Directional Signage

In general there was almost no wayfinding signage and/or Information signs to help first-time users locate their destination(s) causing much confusion and uncertainty, and ultimately limiting their curiosity regarding visiting. A study conducted by Vinay K.Y. and Paramashivaiah (2024) states that good infrastructure and transportation systems are necessary for improving the growth of tourism throughout the state of Karnataka.

#### 4.4 THE NEED FOR HEALTHY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PRACTICES.

This phenomenon also indicates a market with a large potential for an emerging trend of “healthy tourism” that is beneficial for both visitors and visitors to communities and the environment in which they conduct their activities.



Figure 3: Healthy and Sustainable Local Tourism Framework

##### 4.4.1 Environmental Benefits of Local Travel

Choosing to visit locations within the proximity of your home limits the amount of carbon emissions produced from travelling and thus reduces the fatigue individuals normally experience during long journey. According to what Santos-Roldán et al. (2020) discovered, as individuals become more aware of sustainable practices, they tend to select travel options which are more sustainable.

##### 4.4.2 Community-Based Tourism as a Solution

Engaging local communities in tourism planning and operations ensures well-rounded and sustainable development. Recent studies in Sustainable Tourism Research (2024) emphasize the importance of environmentally responsible tourism in preserving the environment and improving the well-being of local communities.

#### 4.5 OVERALL GAP IDENTIFIED.

In essence, this research identifies a significant gap; these tourist spots around Bangalore have great potential they are nearby, rich in nature, and rich in culture. However, their low online presence, lack of infrastructure, poor marketing, and inaccessibility make them invisible to most tourists.

With better coordination between government agencies, local communities, and online resources, these off the beaten path

destinations can be responsibly promoted to attract tourists without overcrowding and damaging the environment.

The interpretation of findings further revealed a sequential pattern contributing to tourism invisibility. Rather than being isolated factors, weak digital presence, low awareness, reduced visitor movement, and stagnant development appear interconnected. This progression is illustrated in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Four-Stage Model of Tourism Invisibility

## CONCLUSION

The study makes it clear that many tourist destinations around Bangalore continue to remain unnoticed despite having strong potential. Most tourism efforts still focus on expanding already popular places, while smaller destinations receive very little attention. Because of this, there is a need to move away from the usual pattern of tourism development and adopt a more sustainable approach. Development should not only aim to increase the number of visitors, but also ensure that tourism benefits local communities, protects the environment, and creates long-term value.

Another important finding is that lack of awareness is one of the biggest reasons these places remain overlooked. Several locations near Bangalore have natural beauty, local traditions, lakes, hills, and village-based experiences that could attract visitors. However, most people are unaware that such places even exist. Popular tourist spots continue to dominate because they are widely advertised, easier to find online, and discussed more often on social media.

Today, people usually decide where to travel based on what they see on the internet. If a destination is not visible online, many people simply do not consider visiting it. This is one of the main reasons smaller attractions struggle to gain attention. In addition, poor road signs, limited transport facilities, and lack of proper information make these destinations even harder to access. As a result, visitors often choose more familiar places instead.

The findings also show that sustainable tourism can offer a better solution. Rather than encouraging large crowds that may damage the area, tourism should grow in a way that protects the local environment and respects the people living there. A community-based model appears to be more suitable

for these destinations. During the field study, it was evident that local residents are interested in participating in tourism-related activities. However, they need support, training, and proper guidance. If local people are involved in planning and decision-making from the beginning, tourism is more likely to remain successful and sustainable over time. Finally, this study mainly focuses on the present situation and immediate challenges. Future research can examine what happens over a longer period of time when these destinations become more popular. It would be useful to study whether increased tourism creates positive changes for local people, how it affects the environment, and whether the benefits continue in the future. Such research could help identify which strategies are most effective in creating a balance between tourism growth and sustainability.

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