



## Unveiling Naga Oun Village: Transforming Egypt's Hidden Gem into a Thriving Rural Tourism Destination

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### Abstract

Rural tourism is a promising avenue for sustainable development, providing economic opportunities, and preserving culture in underdeveloped regions. This study focuses on Naga Oun village in Egypt, delving into its potential and challenges as a rural tourism destination.

Qualitative methods, including interviews and observations, reveal key themes of what this unique spot needs to flourish and overcome its pressing challenges, including capacity building, marketing, and development strategies. Despite possessing abundant natural and cultural resources, the village encounters obstacles such as limited visibility, technological gaps, and skill deficiencies. The research suggests a comprehensive approach, encompassing capacity building, cultural preservation, technology integration, community empowerment, sustainable practices, infrastructure development, monitoring, and public-private partnerships to foster sustainable rural tourism.

Stakeholders stress the importance of targeted initiatives to improve residents' skills and propose a marketing campaign to establish Naga Oun as an authentic rural destination. The development plan advocates diverse tourism offerings, such as immersive farm experiences and festivals.

The study presents a roadmap for rural tourism development in Egypt, outlining key recommendations and practical insights. Successful implementation can underpin sustainable development, generate economic opportunities, safeguard cultural heritage, and enrich the overall tourism experience in rural Egypt.

**Keywords:** No Poverty (SDG 1), Rural Tourism, Sustainable Development, Naga Oun Village, Egypt.

### 1. Introduction

Rural tourism holds considerable significance within the tourism industry due to various compelling factors. It aligns closely with the principles of sustainable tourism, offering avenues for the sustainable development of

rural areas through enhancements in living standards, heightened public consciousness, and the preservation of local culture and heritage (Yu, 2021). Moreover, the advancement of rural tourism stands to yield substantial economic advantages for rural communities, including augmented income, job

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generation, and the stimulation of local product and service markets (Liu et al., 2023). Notably, by nurturing and showcasing local cultural heritage, rural tourism effectively positions rural locales as prime destinations for cultural tourism (Yılmaz & Yılmaz, 2019). Additionally, rural tourism emerges as a potential mechanism for mitigating poverty among elderly rural households and fostering rural rejuvenation (Guo et al., 2023). It also serves as a platform for empowering local communities and facilitating opportunities for individuals with disabilities (Fathy & Fouad, 2022), thereby fostering their personal development (Gomes & Eusébio, 2023).

Egypt, renowned for its ancient wonders and bustling urban centers, is increasingly attracting attention as a diverse tourist destination (Khalaf, 2022). Amidst this landscape, Naga Oun village emerges as a hidden gem, offering a unique blend of cultural heritage, natural beauty, and the tranquility of rural life, which are prerequisites for any successful rural destination (Csurgó & Smith, 2022; Sardaro et al., 2021). Naga Oun is a small village affiliated with Kafr El Dawar – El Beheira Governorate at the borderline between El Behira and Alexandria (Elsheikh, 2022). Naga Oun village, situated among the underdeveloped regions of Egypt, possesses substantial untapped potential and resources conducive to tourism and local economic development, alongside certain inherent challenges and obstacles. The community actively participates in rooftop agriculture, the production of carpets, and the cultivation of silkworms for silk production (UNWTO, 2023). Naga Oun showcases an impressive natural setting characterized by awe-inspiring landscapes, majestic mountains, and verdant fields. The aesthetic allure of the village's natural environment stands out as a noteworthy attraction for tourists (Naga' Oun FarmCraftVillage, n.d.).

Despite the promising potential of Naga Oun, several challenges hinder the realization of its envisioned future. Firstly, the village's absence from Egypt's rural tourism map contributes to its lack of recognition among the general populace, limiting its ability to attract visitors

(Mekawy, 2020). Secondly, local residents in Naga Oun may face a deficiency in experience when it comes to utilizing technology and implementing effective marketing strategies essential for competing in the tourism market (Techakana & Potisat, 2019). This lack of expertise poses a significant obstacle to promoting the village as a desirable destination. Thirdly, Naga Oun grapples with insufficient facilities and skills necessary to ensure the delivery of high-quality services and cater to the diverse needs of visitors (Gohar & Kondolf, 2020). Addressing these challenges will be crucial for Naga Oun to overcome barriers and emerge as a thriving rural tourism destination in Egypt.

This study aims to explore the opportunities and challenges faced by the village in leveraging its cultural heritage, natural beauty, and local resources for sustainable tourism development. Through a comprehensive analysis, the study intends to highlight strategies for promoting Naga Oun as a viable rural tourism destination, considering factors such as community involvement, technological adaptation, infrastructure development, and service quality enhancement. By investigating the case of Naga Oun, the study seeks to contribute insights into the broader discourse on rural tourism development in Egypt and provide recommendations for policymakers, local authorities, and tourism stakeholders to foster sustainable growth and socioeconomic benefits in rural areas.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Definition and characteristics of rural tourism**

In recent literature, rural tourism has garnered attention as a multifaceted phenomenon, encompassing various recreational, leisure, and educational activities undertaken in rural areas. Scholars have commonly defined rural tourism as the practice of visiting countryside locales to engage with local communities, heritage, culture, and natural resources (Saad, 2022). This definition underscores the essence of rural tourism as a means for travelers to connect with the authentic experiences offered by rural life,

away from urban centers (Rosalina et al., 2021). Central to this concept are several key characteristics that delineate the nature of rural tourism experiences.

One defining characteristic of rural tourism is its emphasis on the preservation of rural heritage (Ivona, 2021; Sardaro et al., 2021). Through various tourism activities, visitors are afforded the opportunity to explore and appreciate the rich history and customs of rural areas, contributing to the safeguarding of intangible cultural assets (Cerquetti et al., 2022). Moreover, rural tourism serves as a platform for the promotion of local culture and traditions (Ćurčić et al., 2021). Scholars have emphasized the importance of tourism initiatives that celebrate and sustain the cultural identity of rural communities (Ezenagu & Geraghty, 2020; Gica et al., 2021; Stokowski et al., 2021). By engaging in cultural events, culinary experiences, and artisanal workshops, tourists actively participate in preserving and revitalizing local traditions, thereby fostering a sense of pride and continuity within rural societies (Fusté-Forné & Cerdan, 2021; Souca, 2019).

Additionally, rural tourism capitalizes on the utilization of natural resources abundant in rural landscapes (Abellán & Martínez, 2021). Studies have underscored the role of outdoor recreational activities, such as hiking, wildlife watching, and agritourism, in attracting visitors to rural areas (Liang et al., 2021; Wanner et al., 2021). The scenic beauty and tranquility of rural environments serve as a draw for tourists seeking respite from urban life, while also providing opportunities for sustainable economic development (Kelfaoui et al., 2021; López-Sanz et al., 2021).

Furthermore, rural tourism is recognized as a catalyst for economic growth and community development in rural regions (Wijijayanti et al., 2020; Yang, et al., 2021). Researchers have identified rural tourism's potential to generate income, create employment opportunities, and stimulate local businesses (Rosalina et al., 2021). By diversifying rural economies and reducing dependency on traditional agricultural practices, rural tourism contributes to the

overall resilience and vitality of rural communities (Ivona et al., 2021).

## **2.2 Benefits and challenges of rural tourism**

One of the major benefits of rural tourism is its ability to generate additional sources of income and foreign exchange earnings (Kataya, 2021). Activities involved in rural tourism, like homestays, farm tours, organic farming, and selling local handicrafts and produce, allow rural communities to tap into the tourism market (Anil & Misra, 2023; Kumar et al., 2020). This supplements farm-based incomes and helps alleviate poverty (Fabeil et al., 2022). In addition to income, rural tourism also leads to direct and indirect employment opportunities through construction of tourism infrastructure like rural guesthouses, homestays, restaurants as well as services related to travel agencies, tour operations, and handicraft production (Romanenko et al., 2020; Rosalina et al., 2021; Yang, et al., 2021).

The preservation of rural culture and heritage is another key benefit (Ma et al., 2021). Rural tourism showcases the rural way of life, architecture, art, festivals, cuisine and crafts to visitors (Jha, 2021). This creates an incentive for communities to maintain traditional skills and customs that may otherwise be lost (Zielinski et al., 2020). The earnings from rural tourism can also be invested in local development projects related to education, healthcare, transportation, sanitation and livelihoods diversification (He et al., 2021). This contributes to overall rural development.

However, there are also several challenges faced in developing rural tourism destinations. Many rural areas lack basic infrastructure facilities required to attract and cater to tourists (Almeida & Machado, 2021). Road connectivity, availability of accommodation, electricity, telecom networks are often inadequate (Giddy et al., 2022). Seasonality is another issue as demand fluctuates based on climate and festivals, leading to low occupancy rates off-season (Martín et al., 2020). Environmental impacts like pollution, overcrowding and pressure on natural resources are risks if tourism planning and management is not properly regulated (An & Alarcón, 2020).

Lack of skills and training among rural communities to effectively market, manage and engage with tourists visiting from different cultures is also a constraint (Zielinski et al., 2020).

### 2.3 Strategies for developing rural tourism

To fully realize rural tourism potential benefits, strategic planning and implementation of appropriate development strategies is required. Lack of basic infrastructure is a major hindrance in attracting tourists to rural areas (Kataya, 2021). Investing in road connectivity, accommodation facilities, electricity, telecommunication networks, water supply and sanitation is essential to enhance the rural tourism experience (Ganji et al., 2021). Public-private partnerships can mobilize resources for infrastructure development (Calero & Turner, 2019).

Rural destinations need to diversify their tourism products and experiences beyond just nature and heritage tours (Huang et al., 2016; Makwindi & Ndlovu, 2022). This includes developing agro-tourism, cultural festivals, recreational activities, sports, culinary experiences, volunteer programs and wellness facilities (Chiran et al., 2016). Diversification aids in reducing seasonality (Martínez et al., 2019).

Rural communities need training in hospitality services, foreign language skills, marketing, financial management, sustainable practices and community engagement (Jamal & Dredge, 2014). This equips locals to effectively participate in and benefit from tourism businesses (Dodds et al., 2018). Community-based training programs led by local educational institutes and tourism boards have proven effective (Manaf et al., 2018).

Developing a unique rural destination brand and marketing strategy is important to create awareness and reach potential tourists (Ruiz-Real et al., 2020). Promotional campaigns highlighting the unique cultural and natural assets through digital and print mediums can aid in positioning the destination (Uner et al., 2023). Collaborations between local businesses, tourism boards and online travel

agencies can boost promotions (Eyisi et al., 2021).

Ensuring active participation and ownership of local communities in planning and operations is vital for equitable and sustainable rural tourism development (Jaafar et al., 2020). This helps address socio-cultural impacts and strengthens local livelihoods and pride (Hassan et al., 2022a). Community cooperatives for tourism businesses have proven an effective model.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Study Area:

Naga Oun is a small village affiliated with Kafr El Dawar—El Beheira Governorate. This village holds a unique position, being located on the border between two governorates, El Behira and Alexandria. Precise population data for Naga Oun is not readily available. Estimates based on local accounts and media reports range between 4,000 and 7,000 inhabitants. Similar to the population data, the exact area of Naga Oun is not officially documented. Estimations from locals and unofficial sources suggest the area falls between 100 and 200 feddans (approximately 42 to 84 hectares).



Fig. 1: A map illustrates Naga Aun's location in Egypt

Despite Naga Oun being included in the presidential initiative "Decent Life for the Development of the Egyptian Countryside," (Egypt Today, 2021) it is facing some challenges, including a lack of employment opportunities, weak health services, and a low level of education.

The community of Naga-Oun has the potential to provide a unique experience as a rural destination for both domestic and international visitors through their inspiring experiment of



turning from a poor and underdeveloped rural spot to a productive one, achieving successful initiatives such as roof-top farming, hand-woven carpets, and clothing industry, as well as raising silkworms.

was a crucial factor. This positioning presented the village with diverse opportunities and challenges, making it an intriguing case for examining the complexities of rural tourism development.

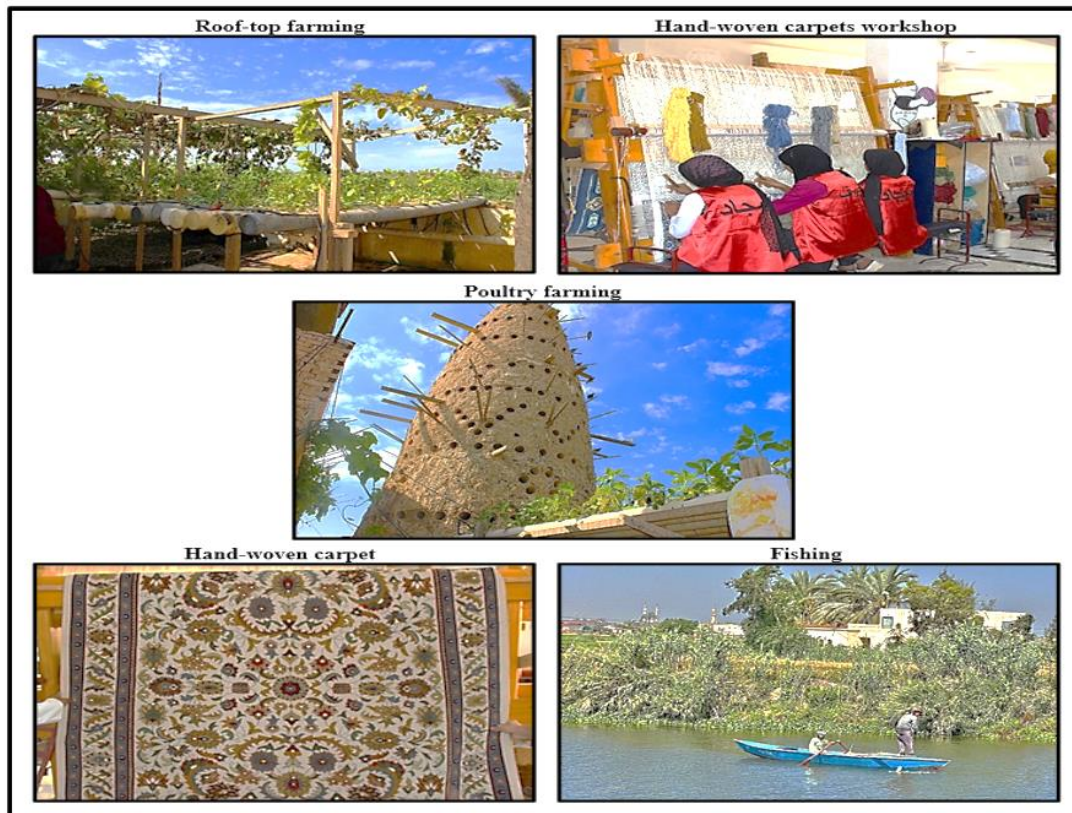


Fig. 2: A collection of images highlights Naga Aun Village's diverse rural activities and cultural and natural resources (Source: Authors' personal collection).

### 3.1.1 Reasons behind the choice of Naga Oun village as a study area:

- **Presidential Initiative Inclusion:** Naga Oun's inclusion in the "Decent Life for the Development of the Egyptian Countryside" presidential initiative marked it as a significant case within the broader rural development context. This initiative served as an indicator of the village's potential for transformation and highlighted its strategic importance in national development efforts.
- **Unique Geographical Positioning:** Naga Oun's unique geographical location on the border between two governorates, El Behira and Alexandria,
- **Community-Driven Initiatives:** The village's proactive efforts in implementing successful initiatives, such as roof-top farming, hand-woven carpets, and the clothing industry, as well as raising silkworms, showcased its resilience and potential for becoming a model for rural development. These initiatives demonstrated the community's commitment to overcoming challenges and creating sustainable economic opportunities.
- **Potential for Tourism Growth:** Despite facing challenges like a lack of employment opportunities, weak health services, and a low level of education, Naga Oun exhibited the potential to

attract domestic and international visitors. The success stories of the community in transforming from a poor and underdeveloped rural spot to a productive one made it a compelling case for exploring the dynamics of rural tourism development.

### 3.2 Research Design:

This study adopts a qualitative research design, specifically employing a case study approach to investigate the transformation of Naga Oun village into a rural tourist destination. A case study allows for an in-depth exploration of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context, making it well-suited for examining the complexities of community-driven tourism initiatives (Rosalina et al., 2021; Zielinski et al., 2020).

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods:

The primary data collection methods include semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in May 2023 with key stakeholders, including local residents, government officials, and representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. These interviews provided insights into the challenges faced by the community, the strategies proposed for capacity building and marketing, and the outcomes for improving the region.

Observation activities involved immersing the researchers in the daily activities of the Naga Oun community to gain a deeper understanding of their socio-economic dynamics, cultural practices, and interactions with visitors. This method allowed for the observation of both formal activities and informal social interactions within the village.

### 3.4 Participants and Sampling Strategy:

Participants for the interviews were selected through purposive sampling to ensure representation from various stakeholder groups involved in the village. The sample included residents of Naga Oun village who have been actively engaged in activities, as well as

external stakeholders such as government officials and representatives from NGOs and the private sector (25 interviewees). The sample size was determined based on the principle of data saturation. Data saturation was achieved after 25 interviews, indicating that further recruitment would not have yielded significant new insights (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

Table 1: Distribution of the Interviews

Targeted respondent groups	Interviews	
	# of participants	%
• Residents and local leaders	16	64%
• Private sector	3	12%
• Government officials	3	12%
• Local NGOs	3	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 3.5 Data Analysis Procedures:

The data collected through interviews and participant observation was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. This process involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and relationships within the data to generate meaningful insights into the research questions (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). Initially, two researchers independently coded a subset of the data to establish a preliminary coding framework. Subsequently, regular meetings were held to compare codes, resolve discrepancies, and refine the coding framework collaboratively. This iterative process was crucial in achieving consensus and enhancing the intercoder's reliability. Following the coding process, the identified codes were grouped into preliminary themes based on their conceptual relationships. We then conducted an in-depth examination of these themes, considering their relevance to the research questions and the conceptual framework of rural tourism and community development. Through constant comparison and discussion among the research team, overarching themes emerged, providing a robust foundation for our analysis.

Themes were derived both deductively, based on the conceptual framework of rural tourism and community development, and inductively,

allowing for the emergence of new themes from the data itself. The analysis was conducted iteratively, with constant comparison between data sources to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

To further enhance the credibility of the analysis, the authors conducted member checking by presenting our preliminary findings to a subset of participants. Their feedback and insights were incorporated into the final analysis, ensuring that our interpretations resonated with the participants' experiences.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations:**

Ethical considerations were adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality (O'Sullivan et al., 2021). Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. Additionally, efforts were made to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to participants, particularly in the case of sensitive topics. Finally, the research was conducted with respect for the cultural norms and traditions of the Naga Oun community, seeking to build trust and collaboration with community members.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

### **4.1 Results of the interviews:**

The results of interviews conducted with a sample of residents from Naga Oun village, along with input from external stakeholders such as government officials, NGO representatives, and members of the private sector, revealed three main themes crucial for the development and sustainability of rural tourism in the area.

Interviewees emphasized the necessity of *capacity building initiatives* targeted at residents, particularly focusing on leaders and production unit supervisors. Training sessions were proposed to enhance residents' proficiency in utilizing technological tools and platforms for marketing and promoting local products.

Emphasis was placed on areas such as branding, digital marketing, social media management, and direct communication with visitors, aiming to reduce reliance on intermediaries and empower the local community.

The development of a *comprehensive marketing campaign* emerged as a key strategy to communicate Naga Oun's unique identity to potential visitors. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of branding, particularly showcasing local handicrafts, organic produce, and the natural landscape. The campaign aims to position Naga Oun as an authentic rural tourist destination while increasing its visibility among target audiences.

To ensure the sustainable growth of Naga Oun as a rural tourism destination, a *multifaceted development plan* was proposed. This plan includes the establishment of a diverse range of tourism offerings, such as immersive farm experiences, rural food and beverage services, and the sale of locally sourced products. Additionally, initiatives such as animal feeding activities, cart and horse rentals, and hosting festivals were identified to enrich visitors' experiences and capitalize on the village's natural assets.

Several suggestions were provided to facilitate the implementation of the identified strategies. These included community capacity building programs focusing on skills development in areas such as customer service, marketing, and entrepreneurship. Furthermore, efforts to preserve and promote Naga Oun's cultural heritage, adoption of sustainable tourism practices, and collaboration with local stakeholders, government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector were emphasized to support the long-term development and sustainability of rural tourism in Naga Oun.

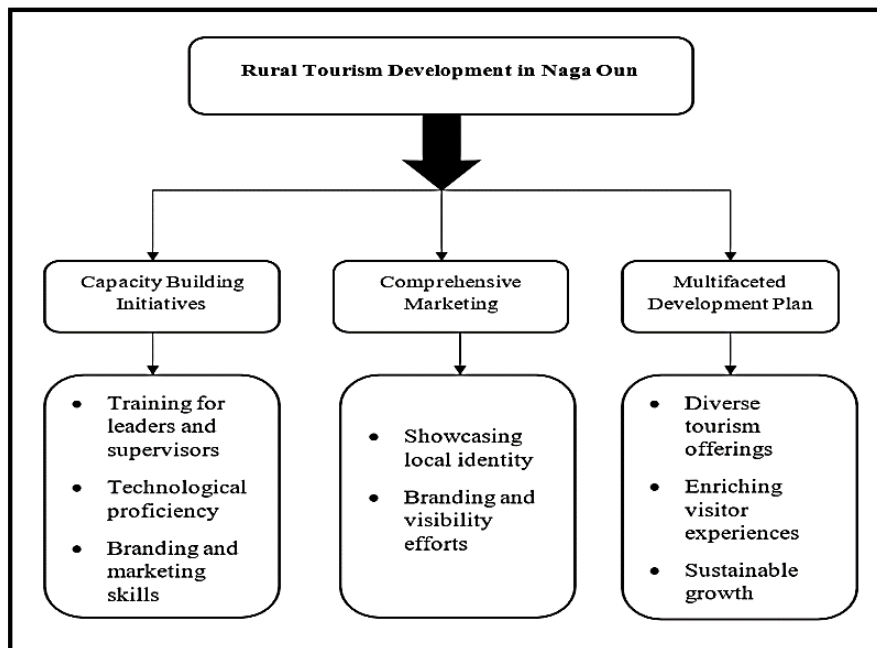


Fig.3: Integrated Strategies for Rural Tourism Development: Insights from Naga Oun Village Interviews and Stakeholder Input

**4.2 Results of observations:**

The observations conducted in Naga Oun village unearthed several notable findings that shed light on the current state of the community and its potential for development.

Limited Visibility emerged as a prominent issue, indicating a lack of awareness and recognition of Naga Oun as a potential tourist destination. The village's unique offerings and attractions remain largely undiscovered by the wider tourism market, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to increase visibility and promote its appeal.

A Technological Gap was identified, revealing a disparity in access to and utilization of technology within the community. This gap poses challenges in leveraging digital platforms for marketing, communication, and business development purposes, inhibiting Naga Oun's ability to reach a broader audience and capitalize on digital marketing opportunities.

Facilities and Skills Deficiency were observed, indicating shortcomings in infrastructure and human capital development. The absence of essential facilities and a lack of skills in areas such as tourism management, customer service,

and marketing hinder the village's capacity to provide quality experiences for visitors and effectively manage tourism operations.

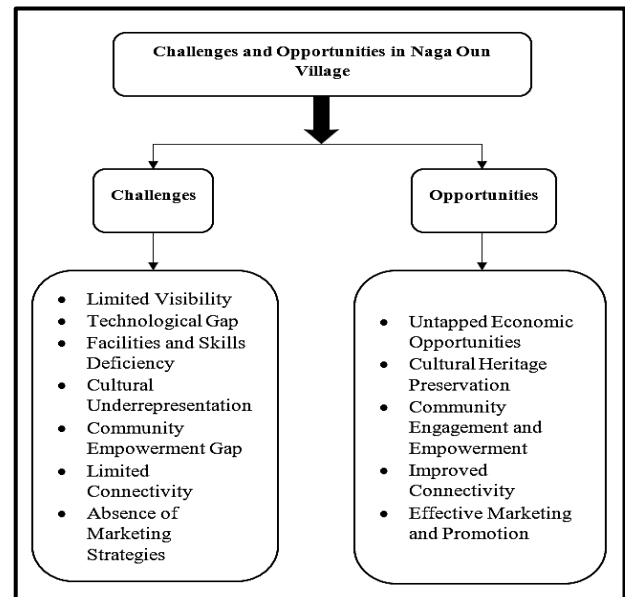


Fig 4: Mapping Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Tourism Development in Naga Oun Village

Cultural Underrepresentation emerged as a concern, signaling a disconnect between Naga Oun's rich cultural heritage and its portrayal in tourism initiatives. The cultural identity and traditions of the community are not adequately



showcased or integrated into tourism activities, diminishing the authenticity of the visitor experience.

Economic Opportunities were found to be largely untapped, with potential revenue streams and livelihood opportunities remaining underutilized. The village's natural resources, local products, and cultural assets present opportunities for economic empowerment and sustainable development, yet these opportunities have yet to be fully realized.

A Community Empowerment Gap was evident, reflecting a lack of participation and engagement among community members in decision-making processes and tourism development initiatives. Empowering local residents to actively contribute to and benefit from tourism activities is essential for fostering ownership and sustainability within the community.

Limited Connectivity was observed, highlighting challenges in transportation and access to essential services. Poor connectivity restricts mobility and inhibits the flow of goods, services, and visitors to and from Naga Oun, impeding its integration into regional tourism circuits and markets.

The absence of marketing and promotion strategies was noted, indicating a missed opportunity to showcase Naga Oun's unique offerings and attract visitors. Effective marketing and promotion are essential for raising awareness, generating interest, and driving visitation to the village, yet such efforts have been lacking or inadequate.

These observational findings provide valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Naga Oun village in its journey towards sustainable tourism development. Addressing these issues will require coordinated efforts and strategic interventions to enhance visibility, leverage technology, develop essential facilities and skills, preserve cultural heritage, unlock economic potential, empower the community,

improve connectivity, and implement effective marketing and promotion strategies.

The study's results and discussions underscore practical, theoretical, and policy implications for the development and sustainability of rural tourism in Naga Oun. Key practical recommendations involve capacity-building initiatives, a comprehensive marketing campaign, and a diverse tourism development plan. Theoretical implications emphasize the importance of cultural heritage preservation, economic empowerment, and community participation in sustaining tourism initiatives. Policy recommendations include investing in capacity-building programs, promoting cultural heritage, integrating technology, prioritizing community engagement, implementing sustainable practices, developing infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and fostering public-private partnerships. These implications collectively provide a roadmap for stakeholders, policymakers, and communities to enhance the visibility, cultural authenticity, economic opportunities, and overall sustainability of rural tourism in Naga Oun, aligning with broader goals of community well-being and cultural preservation.

## **5. Conclusion**

The research encompassed both interviews with residents and stakeholders and observations conducted in Naga Oun village, revealing critical insights into the development and sustainability of rural tourism in the area.

The interviews highlighted three main themes crucial for rural tourism development: capacity building, marketing campaign, and a development plan for future expansion. Participants stressed the importance of capacity building initiatives targeting residents, especially leaders and production unit supervisors, to enhance skills in areas such as branding, digital marketing, and direct communication with visitors. A comprehensive marketing campaign aimed to position Naga Oun as an authentic rural tourist destination, emphasizing local handicrafts, organic produce, and the natural landscape.

Additionally, a development plan proposed diverse tourism offerings, including immersive farm experiences and hosting festivals. Suggestions for implementation included community capacity building, cultural heritage preservation, sustainable tourism practices, and collaboration with stakeholders for long-term sustainability.

Furthermore, rural tourism, when managed well, has the potential to contribute to poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable communities, and environmental protection in Naga Aun village, which is related to some of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations (SDGs), such as:

**SDG 1: No Poverty:** Rural tourism can create income-generating opportunities for elderly rural households, directly addressing poverty reduction. This can empower them financially and improve their overall well-being.

**SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:** By creating jobs in tourism-related sectors like hospitality, artesanato, and local guiding, rural tourism can contribute to economic growth in rural areas. This can benefit not just the elderly but the entire community.

**SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities:** Rural tourism can revitalize rural communities by attracting investment and infrastructure development. This can improve access to basic services, education, and healthcare, leading to more sustainable and livable communities.

However, observations revealed several critical issues hindering the development of rural tourism in Naga Oun. Limited visibility and a technological gap underscored challenges in marketing and leveraging digital platforms effectively. Facilities and skills deficiencies, particularly in tourism management and customer service, highlighted barriers to providing quality visitor experiences. Cultural underrepresentation raised concerns about showcasing the community's rich heritage authentically. Economic opportunities remained untapped, indicating unrealized

potential for local economic development. A community empowerment gap and limited connectivity hindered community participation and access to essential services, respectively. The absence of marketing and promotion strategies further exacerbated challenges in attracting visitors and raising awareness about Naga Oun's offerings.

The synthesis of interview and observational findings provides comprehensive insights into the challenges and opportunities facing Naga Oun's rural tourism development. Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts to enhance visibility, bridge technological gaps, develop essential facilities and skills, preserve cultural heritage, unlock economic potential, empower the community, improve connectivity, and implement effective marketing strategies. By addressing these challenges and capitalizing on opportunities, Naga Oun can realize its potential as a sustainable rural tourism destination, benefiting both residents and visitors alike.

### **5.1 Recommendations for rural tourism development in Egypt**

Policy makers should prioritize investment in capacity building programs aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of rural communities involved in tourism. These programs should focus on areas such as marketing, hospitality management, sustainable practices, and cultural preservation to empower local residents and improve the quality of tourism services (Zielinski et al., 2020).

Policy makers and Egyptian government should develop strategies to promote the preservation and promotion of Egypt's rich cultural heritage in rural tourism destinations. This can be achieved through the implementation of heritage conservation initiatives, support for traditional crafts and cultural events, and integration of local cultural experiences into tourism activities (Khalaf, 2022).

According to Hassan et al. (2022b), in recent times, an increasing number of scholars have acknowledged the pivotal importance of technology in the distribution of services. Thus, the integration of technology into rural tourism development should be facilitated (Kumar &

Shekhar, 2020). Elsayy (2023a) and Elsayy (2023b) concluded that businesses can improve the effectiveness of their marketing endeavors by utilizing technology in promotional activities and optimizing digital platforms for user-friendly experiences. This includes investing in digital infrastructure, promoting the use of online marketing platforms and booking systems, and providing training and support to local communities to harness the potential of technology for promoting their destinations and enhancing visitor experiences. Egyptian government should prioritize community engagement and empowerment in tourism planning and decision-making processes (Rijal, 2023). This involves fostering partnerships between government agencies, local communities, NGOs, and the private sector, and ensuring that local residents have a voice in tourism development initiatives that affect their livelihoods and well-being.

Promoting the adoption of sustainable tourism practices in rural areas of Egypt should be prioritized. This includes implementing policies and regulations that promote environmental conservation, supporting eco-friendly tourism initiatives, and encouraging responsible tourism behavior among visitors (Polukhina et al., 2021).

Policy makers should enhance institutional support for rural tourism development by strengthening regulatory frameworks, providing financial incentives and support mechanisms for tourism entrepreneurs, and fostering collaboration among relevant government agencies, local authorities, and other stakeholders (Liu et al., 2020).

Promoting the development of diverse tourism offerings in rural areas of Egypt to attract a wide range of visitors should be enhanced (Khairi & Darmawan, 2021). This includes supporting the development of niche tourism products such as cultural tourism, adventure tourism, agro-tourism, and ecotourism, and ensuring that tourism development is inclusive and benefits all segments of society.

Policy makers should prioritize investment in infrastructure development in rural tourism destinations to improve accessibility, connectivity, and the overall visitor experience.

This includes upgrading transportation networks, developing tourist facilities and amenities, and enhancing basic services such as water supply, sanitation, and waste management (Fouad, 2021).

Government should establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track the progress and impact of rural tourism development initiatives. This involves collecting data on key performance indicators such as visitor arrivals, economic benefits, environmental indicators, and community well-being, and using this information to inform policy decisions and strategic planning (Apostolopoulos et al., 2020; Khalil & Fathy, 2021). As per the findings of M. Elsayy and Eltayeb (2023), having ample and precise data can lead to plans and decisions that are not only more accurate but also more efficient, prompt, well-informed, creative, and practical.

Policy makers should promote public-private partnerships as a key strategy for driving tourism development in rural areas of Egypt. This involves creating an enabling environment for private sector investment, facilitating collaboration between government and private sector stakeholders, and leveraging the expertise and resources of both sectors to support sustainable tourism growth (Deladem et al., 2020).

By implementing these recommendations, policy makers can support the sustainable development of rural tourism in Egypt, create economic opportunities for local communities, preserve cultural heritage, and enhance the overall tourism experience for visitors.

## **5.2 Limitations and future research directions**

The research paper provides valuable insights into the development and sustainability of rural tourism in Naga Oun, but it also has certain limitations.

The research focuses on a single village, Naga Oun, which might limit the generalizability of the findings to other rural areas. Future research could include multiple villages or regions to provide a more nuanced view of rural tourism development in Egypt. Moreover, the study exclusively adopts a qualitative research

design. While this is suitable for in-depth exploration, combining qualitative and quantitative methods could offer a more robust understanding, allowing for statistical analysis and broader generalizations.

This limitation paves the road for future research, including comparative studies involving multiple rural villages to identify common challenges and unique strategies that may vary across different contexts. In addition, integrate quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness of capacity-building programs, economic growth, and other factors influencing rural tourism. This could include surveys and statistical analyses. Moreover, incorporate perspectives from a broader range of stakeholders, such as tourists, local businesses, and academics, to gain a holistic understanding of rural tourism development. Furthermore, evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies related to rural tourism development in Egypt and propose policy recommendations based on empirical evidence.

By addressing these limitations and exploring these suggested avenues, future research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of rural tourism development in Egypt and potentially inform effective strategies for sustainable growth in similar contexts.

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