

## Impacts of Tourism on Rural Livelihood in the Sustainability of an Ageing Community in Japan

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### Abstract

Rural tourism, which is often considered as rural development initiatives, has been extensively studied in Japanese context, however, usually observed at a community level, and supposed that host households were homogeneous. The article added to established literature by studying how rural tourism, contributes to sustainable livelihoods at household level in an ageing community in a developed economy. For this purpose, a qualitative study was conducted in a farm inn group in Noto town, a Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System (GIAHS) site in Japan. We tested three hypotheses: 1) rural tourism in a remote/isolated region has changed the livelihood assets of host households; 2) the economic benefits from rural tourism is marginal to host households; and 3) the benefits other than income earning exceeds economic benefits for ageing communities. Generally, host communities have improved their livelihood assets through farm inn business. The residents' life quality has been improved in this super ageing rural, although, economic benefits are still marginal to majority of the host households. Tourists have brought vitality to these remote villages. The lacking of young residents and inherits of their farm inn business is a bottleneck to its future development. The social capital should be strengthened through forming a social network with local government, as well as private sectors.

**Keywords:** Agricultural heritage, Community participation, Farm inn, GIAHS, Livelihood assets, Rural development

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