

Scope of Tourism: Indian Perspectives

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ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to probe the scope of tourism in India, which can help in shaping our society. Tourism is considered as one sector that shall propel growth, contribute foreign exchange, enhance employability and result in community development. The most important dimension of tourism is the cultural exchange among various nationalities that visit the country and the cross cultural interface that shall pave way for universal peace and harmony. As on one hand tourism is seen as an economic option and on the other side the greater social and human effect. There is vast scope tourism in India. The government should encourage private enterprises to promote tourism in in various less popular areas. For developing tourism in such areas, we need to understand the environment, demography, socio-culture, economic and political background of any place for making it an attractive tourist spot. To develop a strategic marketing plan for tourism we have to understand the target customer their needs and wants and how to match it with our tourist spots' infrastructure.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. Tourism is travel for recreational or leisure purposes. The World Tourism Organization defines tourists as people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited". Tourism has become a popular global leisure activity. In 2008, there were over 903 million international tourist arrivals, with a growth of 6.6% as compared to 2007. International tourist receipts were USD 856 billion in 2008. Despite the uncertainties in the global economy, arrivals grew at around 5% during the first four months of 2009, almost a similar growth than the same period in 2008.

II. TOURISM IN INDIA

Tourism in India has seen exponential growth in the recent years. India is one of the most preferred destinations for both overseas and domestic travelers. Tourism enables the international traveler to understand and experience India's cultural diversity first hand. According to official estimates the Indian tourism industry has out performed the global tourism industry in terms of growth in the volume of foreign tourists as well as in terms of revenue.

United Nations has classified three forms of Tourism in its Recommendations on Tourism Statistics:

- (i) **Domestic tourism**, which involves Residents of the given country traveling only within the country;
- (ii) **Inbound Tourism**, involving non-residents traveling in the given country; and
- (iii) **Outbound Tourism**, involving residents traveling in another country. The UN also derived different categories of Tourism by combining the three Basic forms of tourism:
 - (a) **Internal tourism**, which comprises domestic tourism and inbound Tourism;
 - (b) **National tourism**, which comprises domestic tourism and outbound Tourism; and
 - (c) **International tourism**, which consists of inbound tourism and outbound Tourism

The main reason for the growth in tourism in India is the tremendous progress made by the Indian economy. Though it must be said that infrastructure is still a constraint. To sustain the current growth the government should invest in infrastructure like transport, accommodation, better roads, health and hygiene etc. To propel growth the industry has invested in new technology like CRM tools and state of the art security systems.

The scope of travel and tourism is truly immense: in the last six years, it has created 11 million jobs and has the potential to create another 37 million jobs (estimated by the NSSO, Ministry of Tourism) of the 120 million projected requirement by 2020.

III. AREAS OF CONCERN

For India, tourism to grow rapidly and significantly, we need to address some key areas of concern: infrastructure, promotion and marketing at domestic and international levels, skill development, tourism-related education, and professionalization of services management, service providers' skill enhancement and the addressing of general hygiene and sanitation concerns. An increased synergy among ministries for the benefit of tourism and simplification of the tax structure needs to be looked into.

IV. MEDICAL TOURISM:

It is one of the fastest growing segments in India. India has been able to leverage on certain advantages it has over other countries like highly skilled doctors, cost effective treatment, improved quality of private healthcare etc. Some of the common treatments for which overseas patients to come to India are heart surgery, knee transplant, cosmetic surgery and dental care. India's traditional rejuvenation therapy like yoga and ayurvedic therapy are also becoming popular. India's system of traditional medicine are a combination of Ayurveda, Siddha Yoga and meditation, it aims at curing ills and helping the patient to lead a healthy, balanced lifestyle. There are a number of health farms and nature spas in India that attract a number of foreigners looking for help in bringing about lifestyle changes and detoxification of the body. The Ministry of Tourism has recognized the scope of medical tourism and has initiated MDA (Market Development Assistance) Scheme to key players in the Medical Tourism space. Road shows are organized at regular intervals to promote India as a Medical Tourism destination.

V. ECO TOURISM

It is relatively new segment in India. It involves visiting natural areas without disturbing the fragile ecosystem. Eco tourism generates wealth for the local people, who in turn take measures to conserve and protect the environment and natural resources. India with its natural diversity is one of the pristine places in the world for eco tourism. The Himalayan region, Kerala, Northeast, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep islands the Western and Eastern Ghats are some of the hot spots for eco tourism in India. India has some of the best wildlife reserves in the world, rich in flora and fauna. Eco-tourism is more than a catch phrase for nature loving travel and recreation. Eco-tourism is consecrated for preserving and sustaining the diversity of the world's natural and cultural environments. It accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains & supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Responsibility of both travellers and service providers is the genuine meaning for eco-tourism.

Eco-tourism also endeavors to encourage and support the diversity of local economies for which the tourism-related income is important. With support from tourists, local services and producers can compete with larger, foreign companies and local families can support themselves. Besides all these, the revenue produced from tourism helps and encourages governments to fund conservation projects and training programs.

Saving the environment around you and preserving the natural luxuries and forest life, that's what eco-tourism is all about. Whether it's about a nature camp or organizing trekking trips towards the unspoilt and inaccessible regions, one should always keep in mind not to create any mishap or disturbance in the life cycle of nature.

Eco-tourism focuses on local cultures, wilderness adventures, volunteering, personal growth and learning new ways to live on our vulnerable planet. It is typically defined as travel to destinations where the flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. Responsible Eco-tourism includes programs that minimize the adverse effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment, and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. Therefore, in addition to evaluating environmental and cultural factors, initiatives by hospitality providers to promote recycling, energy efficiency, water reuse, and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities are an integral part of Eco-tourism.

Heritage Tourism

Heritage tourism is a very lucrative segment in India. It is widely believed it would emerge as the most important segment within tourism in terms of revenue generation by 2010. India has a rich cultural history and reflection of its glorious past is still visible in its numerous forts, monuments, palaces, places of worship etc. Heritage tourism itself can be further classified as colonial heritage, urban renewal, religious tourism, industrial heritage and ethnicity. The Indian government must show keen interest in preserving the heritage sites from a tourism perspective.

Adventure Tourism

India's varied geographical and climatic conditions offer excellent opportunity for adventure sports. In recent times the popularity of adventure tourism has increased. Adventure sports like river rafting, rock climbing, mountaineering, trekking, skiing, snow climbing, scuba diving and angling can be undertaken in the country and the country offers multiple locations to choose from. The trans Himalayan region, the Garhwali and Kumaon mountains, the Western Ghats, deserts of Rajasthan, Andaman and Lakshadweep islands are some of the most popular destination for adventure tourism. The endless scope of adventure tourism in India is largely because of its diverse topography and climate. On land and water, under water and in the air, you can enjoy whatsoever form of adventure in India you want. It is one opportunity for you to leave all inhibitions behind and just let yourself go. The mountainous regions offer umpteen scope for mountaineering, rock climbing, trekking, skiing, skating, mount biking and safaris while the rushing river from these mountains are just perfect for river rafting, canoeing and kayaking. The oceans are not behind in any manner as well. The vast and deep expanse of water provides tremendous opportunity for adventure sports in form of diving and snorkeling.

The forest and the desert region have their own distinct place in providing scope for adventure tourism in India. You can enjoy animal safari, jeep safari, bird watching, wild camp, wildlife safari and jungle trail in the forest region while jeep safari and camel safari are the most favoured adventure sports in the desert region. After all this, if you think the list of adventure sports in India has ended, think again. There is still much left in form of paragliding, hand gliding, hot air ballooning, etc.

Agri – tourism

AGRICULTURAL TOURISM- a type of tourism where visitors can help out on a working farm, buy produce from a farm shop or be involved in other leisure activities on the farm's land. Some of the important advantages of Agri – Tourism are:

1. It brings major primary sector agriculture closer to major service sector tourism. This convergence is expected to create win-win situation for both the sectors.
2. Tourism sector has potential to enlarge.
3. Agriculture sector has the capacity to absorb expansion in tourism Sector.

VI.SCOPE OF AGRI – TOURISM

Agri-Tourism has great scope in the present context for the following reasons: 1. An inexpensive gateway - The cost of food, accommodation, recreation and Travel is least in Agri-Tourism. This widens the tourist base. Present concept of travel and tourism is limited to urban and rich class which constitutes only a small portion of the population. However, the concept of Agri-Tourism takes travel and tourism to the larger population, widening the scope of tourism due to its cost effectiveness.

2. Curiosity about the farming industry and life style - The urban population having roots in villages always have had the curiosity to learn about sources of food, plants, animals, raw materials like wood, handicrafts, languages, culture, tradition, dresses and rural lifestyle. Agri-Tourism which revolves around farmers, villages and agriculture has the capacity to satisfy the curiosity of this segment of population.

3. Strong demand for wholesome family oriented recreational activities -Villages provide recreational opportunities to all age groups i.e. children young, middle and old age, male, female, in total to the whole family at a cheaper cost. Rural games, festivals, food, dress and the nature provides variety of entertainment to the entire family.

4. Health consciousness of urban population and finding solace with nature friendly.

Cultural Tourism

Cultural tourism India is the predominant factor behind India's meteoric rise in the tourism segment in recent years, because from time immemorial, India has been considered the land of ancient history, heritage, and culture.

The government of India has set up the Ministry of Tourism and Culture to boost cultural tourism in India. The ministry in recent years has launched the 'Incredible India!' campaign and this has led to the growth of culture tourism in India.

India has had many rulers over the centuries and all of them made an impact on India's culture. One can see the influence of various cultures in dance, music, festivities, architecture, traditional customs, food, and languages. It is due to the influence of all these various cultures that the heritage and culture of India is exhaustive and vibrant. This richness in culture goes a long way in projecting India as the ultimate cultural tourism destination given boost to tourism in culture in India.

The most popular states in India for cultural tourism are:

- Kerala
- Rajasthan
- Tamil Nadu

- Uttar Pradesh
- Uttaranchal

<http://www.indialine.com/travel/culture/>

Among the various states for cultural tourism in India, Rajasthan is the most popular. The reason for this is that Rajasthan is famous for its rich cultural heritage. The state is renowned for many magnificent palaces and forts which showcase the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan. The various folk songs and music also reflect the cultural heritage of Rajasthan. A large number of festivals and fairs are held in Rajasthan such as the camel festival, Marwar festival, and Pushkar festival. All these attract many tourists to Rajasthan for they get to see the rich culture of the state.

Tamil Nadu is also famous for cultural tourism in India, for it shows the Dravidian tradition and culture. It has many temples which mirror the rich cultural heritage of India. Uttar Pradesh has a lot of tourist places

Youth Tourism

Young people travel inside the country and abroad on holiday, to visit friends, to study, to understand various cultures as well as for adventure and relaxation. Psychologists look upon youth travel as part of their transition to adulthood. Domestic youth travel is regarded as an extension of the education process familiarizing young people with their country. There is no widely accepted definition of the youth travel market segment. This lack of clarity contributes to the difficulty in measuring its size and characteristics.

Definition of Youth Tourism market

Youth travelers are recognized today as valuable visitors who can, not only make an important economic contribution to the places they visit, but also develop personal skills, social ties and cultural links in their quest for engaging experiences. Youth tourism market is defined by World Tourism Organization as: • young people 30 years of age and under, who are traveling outside the family unit, not for business, and not primarily to visit friends or relatives, and whose travel includes at least one overnight stay. Under this definition, the youth tourism market includes:

- all trips and tours of at least one night's stay;
- domestic and international travel and;
- group and independent travel.

The youth travel market can be divided into two broad categories: independent youth travel and youth group travel. Youth group travel consists of a group of six (6) or more unrelated young people traveling together. Some industry experts further divide the youth group travel segment into two groups: school-based youth group travel (also often referred to as "student travel") and non-school based youth group travel. School-based youth group travel is specifically sanctioned by the sponsoring school, school board or school district. It should be noted that although day-trip travel is not

Pilgrimage Tourism

India being a country of the pious is dotted with sacred pilgrimage centres. Thus, pilgrimage tourism in India is extremely popular. Great religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism have originated on the Indian soil. The Hindu religion and place of worship are always unique to the rest of the world. To the outside world India is an orthodox country. The superstitions and the religious related aspects dominated the life in India.

Despite this, Indian Philosophy preaches that every man should observe universal brotherhood and in order to achieve this noble objective, every true believer in God will have to visit sacred places and attend discourses of great people.

Pilgrimage is recognized as widespread religious practice based on the belief that certain places are more powerful than others. Tirumala is one of the rare places in the globe where people gather in great number, from various parts of the world, irrespective of caste, creed, race, language and nationality.

The temple beginnings are shrouded in great antiquity and its origins are still a matter of scholarly debate. Sangam literature, the earliest of Tamil literature (dated between 500 BC to AD 300) mentions Tirupati as Tiruvengadam which used to form the northernmost frontier of the Tamil kingdom. Tirupati was richly endowed by the kings and emperors of various dynasties. The Pallavas of Kanchipuram (9th century AD) Cholas of Tanjore (10th century), Pandyas of Madhura (14th century AD) and Vijayanagara kings (14th & 15th centuries) were committed devotees of Sri Venkateswara. Annually 2.5 Crore pilgrim have darshan of the Lord. In the 2009-10 a total of 2.5 Crores of pilgrims have had darshan of the lord. So the TTD try to do their best to provide amenities to the pilgrims. The pilgrimage tourism in Tirumala has emerged as an instrument of income.

VII.CAREER OPTIONS IN TRAVEL & TOURISM

Owing to its wide scope travel and tourism offers various career opportunities both in the public and private sector. In the public sector, there are opportunities in the Directorates and Departments of Tourism of the center and the state as Officers, information assistants, Tourist guides etc. In the private sector qualified tourism personnel can work as travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, hotels, transport and cargo companies etc. The emerging tie-ups of private airlines with foreign airlines has removed barriers in the transport and communication network. This has led to increase in number of domestic and foreign tourists in the country.

VIII.FUTURE TRENDS

- The real GDP growth for travel and tourism economy is expected to be 0.2 per cent in 2009 and is expected to grow at an average of 7.7 per cent per annum in the coming decade.
- Earning through exports from international visitors and tourism goods are expected to generate 6.0 per cent of total exports (nearly \$16.9 billion) in 2009 and expected to increase to US\$ 51.4 billion in 2019.
- According to the Ministry of Tourism, Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) for the period from January to March in 2009 was 1.461 million. For the month of March 2009 the FTAs was 472000. The reason for the decline is attributed to the ongoing economic crisis.
- In spite of the short term and medium term impediment due to the global meltdown the revenues from tourism is expected to increase by 42 per cent from 2007 to 2017.

IX.CONCLUSION

Some suggestions include the formation of a steering committee on tourism, inclusion of the Ministry of Tourism in the council on skill development and industry in the National Skill Development Coordination Board, and facilitating the development of integrated tourism destinations, Tourism, in my opinion, is a perfect vehicle for inclusive growth of society as it showcases the heritage of the nation and positively contributes to the development of local communities and poverty alleviation. Incredible India's promise of enthralling and engaging tourists will continue to capture the hearts of millions as the tourism industry of the country puts its best foot forward. The future of tourism in India is certainly bright but we do have a long road ahead. Development of quality infrastructure will be the key to India's harnessing her full tourism potential. The Ministry of Tourism has been very supportive to the fraternity efforts, and now visa on arrival is slowly becoming a reality.

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