



Tourism in Rajasthan: Challenges and Opportunities

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Tourism industry has been defined as a leisure industry and smokeless industry. This industry is considered one of the ancient industries of the world and primarily, tourism was only confined to Rulers or Kings of the nations and some enterprising men travelled in search of God or for pilgrimage purposes. The concept of modern tourism is relatively new in its approach. With the growth of science and technology and revolutionary changes that have been taken place in the field of transportation and communication have contributed massively to the development of tourist trade all over the world. Tourism industry in India is on a great boom at the moment. India has tremendous potential to become a major global tourist destination and Indian tourism industry is exploiting this potential to the hilt. A state like Rajasthan has all the ingredients and elements to become a model state for tourism in the country. It is sad fact for Rajasthan that the vehicle of culture, heritage and tradition is still being denied national recognition. This article cover all major aspects relating to tourism industry in India and Rajasthan and throw light on challenges and opportunities face by tourism industry in Rajasthan and represent statistics of domestic and foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan.*

INTRODUCTION OF TOURISM INDUSTRY

Tourism is an infrastructure based service product. It is identified by the products, which are needed to satisfy the demand for travel, accommodation, food and beverages away from home. Tourism industry has grown as an important industry and has gained worldwide importance and significance almost in every economic activity. Many economies of the countries depend largely on this tourism industry and ranks among the top three industries. Tourism has the highest multiplier effect in creating prosperity in the development of communication, transportation, accommodation and other consumer related services and gives benefits of development of trade and transport, increase in standard of living, development of local handicrafts and even builds the image of the nation.

TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDIA

As far Indian tourism concerned, India has a vast tourist tourism attractions being rich in its history, culture, art, music, dance, beaches, wildlife and fairs and festivals. The tourism industry in India is fast growing industry in terms of employment generation, revenue generation and for its immense national and regional development. In India, development of tourism was taken up in a planned manner in 1956 coinciding with the Second Five Year Plan. But actual tourism taken place during the Sixth Plan when tourism began to be considered a major instrument for social integration and economic development. But it was only after the 80's that tourism activity gained momentum in India. The Government of India took several significant steps and announced National Policy on tourism in 1982. Later in 1988, the National Committee on Tourism formulated a comprehensive plan for achieving a sustainable growth in tourism. The New Tourism Policy 2002 recognizes the roles of Central and State governments, public sector undertakings and the private sector in the development of tourism. Tourism in India has come into its own as a brand – India Tourism. There have been several innovative approaches in the Ministry's policy and many tourism products like medical tourism, wellness tourism, adventure tourism, cruise tourism and rural tourism has served to widen this sector.

TOURISM INDUSTRY IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan being situated in the northwest part of India is a land of majestic Aravali Hills, crowned with sand dunes of Jaisalmer and Bikaner, scenic and serene beauty and the land

of royal creatures bird watchers. The very rich culture heritage and most hospitable people make journey to Rajasthan a most enjoyable experience of life both for foreign and domestic tourists. The customs and traditions, fairs and festivals, handicrafts, art and music reflect the very broad spectrum of the Rajasthani culture where much of the Rajasthan thought, philosophy and culture is being reflected all over the State. Rajasthan tourism offers numerous possibilities from adventure to nature holidays, pilgrimage to sightseeing. Many of the cities in Rajasthan like Jaipur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Udaipur offering ancient architect, paintings, music, Rajasthani dresses and food makes it as one of the international destinations.

Tourism industry in Rajasthan is a vital breath and considered as an apex industry which gives economic benefits like foreign exchange earnings, regional development, infrastructure development and promotion of local handicrafts. The state government has already realized the potentials of this industry for the economic development in the state and has adopted vital measures to promote tourism in the state by adopting schemes like "Padharo Mhare Desh" means Rajasthan invites you. No wonder that Rajasthan has been called the "Designer state" as far as tourism is concerned because of its culture, cuisine, customs and art forms. Over the last two decades, Rajasthan has emerged as one of the leading state in India and Rajasthan was the third preference of tourist after Goa and Kerala as travel destination in India. As Rajasthan occupies unique place for tourism in India and various measures has been taken by Ministry of Tourism and Government of Rajasthan to improve tourism in state which results that Rajasthan won National Tourism Awards Best State/UT for Tourism related programmes from the year 2007-08 to 2009-10. Similarly to increase tourism in the state, government of Rajasthan establishes Department of Tourism, Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation Ltd., Rajasthan Institute of Travel and Tourism Management and many other organizations which play a vital role for increasing tourism in the state.

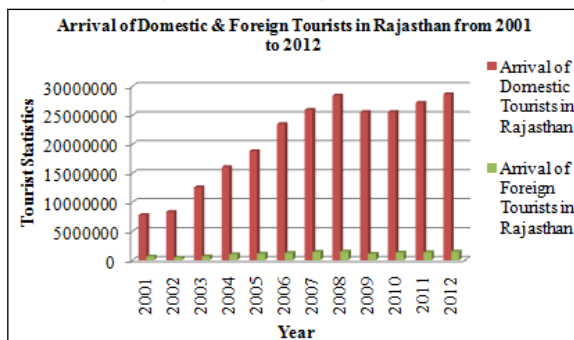
The growth rate of tourism in the state of Rajasthan has shown that tourists arrivals both domestic and foreign in the state of Rajasthan is increasing annually and it increase 0.83 crore to 3.01crore from the year 2001 to 2012 which represent that more attention made to this sector in state plans. The position of domestic tourist growth in the state is more satisfactory because domestic tourists generally influenced

by religious motivators and state of Rajasthan has spiritual and pilgrimage centers like Pushkar, Nathdwara, Ajmer, Mahaveerji. Thus to enhance tourism in the state many new measures has been taken by the state government like organizing fairs and festivals, arranging package tours, running heritage trains, establishing more number of Tourists Information bureau and Reception Centers and providing facility of safari tours.

Table 1 Arrival of Domestic & Foreign Tourists in Rajasthan from 2001 to 2012

Year	Arrival of Domestic Tourists in Rajasthan	Arrival of Foreign Tourists in Rajasthan
2001	7757217	608283
2002	8300190	428437
2003	12545135	628560
2004	16033896	971772
2005	18787298	1131164
2006	23483287	1220164
2007	25920529	1401042
2008	28358918	1477646
2009	25558691	1073414
2010	25543877	1278523
2011	27137323	1351974
2012	28611831	1451370

Source: www.rajsthan-tourism.gov.in



The Table 1 shows statistics of domestic and foreign tourists arrival in Rajasthan from the year 2001 to 2012. As above table shows that from the year 2001 to 2008 arrival of domestic tourists are increasing from 77.57 lacs to 283.59 lacs and foreign tourists are fluctuating from the year 2001 to 2012. As this statistical data shows that in these years more number of domestic and foreign tourists visits Rajasthan because of heritage and pilgrimage tourism in the state. But in the year 2009 and 2010, trends of domestic tourists are decreasing because of high infrastructure cost, lack of tourists facilities at tourists places and lack of governmental and local people support to enhance domestic tourism. As above statistics shows that in many years high rate of foreign tourists arrival in the state because foreign tourists are attracted by culture, tradition, customs and traditions, fairs and festivals, handicrafts, art and music of Rajasthan. As declining trends of foreign tourists figures shows that due to increase in shopping malpractices, lack of safety at tourists places, poor infrastructure and lack of publicity gives adverse effects to tourists arrival which result in decreasing rate of employability for lo-

cal tourists guide and tour operators, decrease in foreign exchange earnings from tourism and less development of local traditional handicrafts and business. Hence above statistics shows that it is keen requirement for government and private bodies to take initiatives to enhance tourism in the state so that rate of domestic and foreign tourists arrival goes high that result in increase in revenue for government, increase employability rate for local people and increase infrastructure development.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FACE BY TOURISM INDUSTRY IN RAJASTHAN

No wonder that Rajasthan enjoy unique advantage as a tourist place because of its culture, tradition, cuisine, costumes and its numberless art forms. But it is true that Rajasthan face problems of underdeveloped and backward in means of transport and communication especially when compared with other regions of the country. Similarly problem of accommodation, lodging facilities, transportation and problem regarding drinking water while travelling are faced by tourist. It has been observed that the foreign tourists are specially attracted by the antiques, art objects and things of daily use such as Rajasthani Shoes, Garments, Ornaments, etc. These shops owners and businessmen are minting money by cheating the tourists through their advertising.

So to overcome from above problems and to increase flow of tourists it is necessary that tourism department should plan the appropriate strategies for accommodation, transport and lodging facilities. For that the Government should take up the modernization of the railways and road transport in a big way. To facilitate the comfortable stay of the tourists the hotel industry should be given all possible encouragement. For building standard hotels and lodges the Government should allocate the suitable lands, financial assistance and other such subsidies which can encourage the hotel business communities and agencies to build enough accommodation for tourists.

To overcome the problem of malpractices, Government should purchase the handicrafts and artifacts directly from the manufacturers and avoid the middle-man profiteering. Similarly to assist tourist, literature pertaining to history, tradition, art, culture, artifacts and handicrafts can be prepared and try to give wide publicity. The tourist guides also play a big role in the development of tourist industry so proper education and training regarding the culture and develop their skills so that they commits the norms of their profession.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a triadic composition of social, natural and the cultural phenomenon, which is emerging as the world's largest employment generating industry. Indian tourism offers many unique products that make India as an ultimate tourism place in world map. Tourism in Rajasthan offer many unique products such as forts and palaces, heritage hotels, colorful fairs and festivals, local art and handicrafts. No doubt tourism industry in Rajasthan suffer some social and environmental problems such as poor infrastructure, damage to heritage and pilgrimage places, environment pollution, lack of connectivity and shopping malpractices. Though it is true that government of Rajasthan has made many efforts to increase tourism in the state and try to improve various tourist services to provide good tourist facilities.

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