



THE POTENTIAL OF TOURISM IN INDIA – ISSUES & CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Tourism has become one of the most important and talked about economic activity in recent times. Services are the major source of economic growth, accounting for more than half of India's output with less than one third of its labor force in tourism. In present times, it is considered as a major catalyst for bringing social and economic changes. Global tourism has become the largest industry in the world, with nearly 500 million consumers of tourism services per year spending hundreds of billions of dollars. The industry provides employment to over 100 million people worldwide. Tourism industry therefore, has emerged as a fastest growing industry. Still India is far behind in attracting the tourists when compared with developed countries. India wants to attract 1% of total world tourists by 2018. In this paper we address the issues and challenges faced by the Indian tourism and measures taken and to be taken by the Government.

KEYWORDS : Tourism, potentiality, economy, jobs, growth

Introduction:

India has emerged as the fastest-growing market in Asia in terms of international tourist spending. India has incredible Monuments, Forts, Palaces, Temples, Beaches, Water Falls, Wild Life Sanctuaries, Memorials, Music, Dance and Culture. There is vibrancy of the culture, both ancient and modern.

Indian culture is considered to be amongst the world's oldest, richest and most diverse. Many travellers have come here and been enchanted by its natural beauty, splendor, beliefs, philosophies and practices. India is one country all men long to see, and having seen it once, would not give up that glimpse for all the wonders of the world. This results in increase in Foreign Exchange Reserves.

The tourism potential of our country, especially in a global context, remains far from realized. Towards realization of this potential, the Ministry of Tourism envisages a target of 12% growth rate in inbound as well as domestic tourists for the 12th Five Year Plan period. It is projected that with this growth rate, the sector will generate 2.5 crore additional jobs.

The Tourism Ministry has launched the "Clean India Campaign" recently. The objective of the Campaign is to ensure an acceptable level of cleanliness and hygiene at various public places. It involves sensitizing all sections of the society on the importance of cleanliness and hygiene in public places. The Campaign will be a blend of persuasion, education, training, demonstration and sensitization of all segments of our society.

In developing countries like India tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy, contributing to a proportion of the National Income and generating huge employment opportunities. It has become the fastest growing service industry in the country with great potentials for its further expansion and diversification, it has direct and indirect chain link with several sector on an economy. Therefore, tourism has both positive and negative far reaching impact on economic, social, political and environment face of India.

Potential of Tourism in India:

Tourism in India is economically important and is growing rapidly. The World Travel & Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated ₹ 8.31 lakh crore (US\$120 billion) or 6.3% of the nation's GDP in 2015 and supported 37.315 million jobs, 8.7% of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an average annual rate of 7.5% to ₹18.36 lakh crore (US\$270 billion) by 2025 (7.2% of GDP). In October 2015, India's medical tourism sector was estimated to be worth US\$3 billion. It is projected to grow to \$7-8 billion by 2020. In 2014, 184,298 foreign patients travelled to India to seek medical treatment.

Analysis on facts and figures:

Table No: 1 Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs), in US\$ million, from Tourism in India, 1999-2016

Year	FEEs from Tourism of India (in US\$ million)	Percentage (%) change over the year
1999	3009	2.1
2000	3460	15.0
2001	3198	-7.6
2002	3103	-3.0
2003	4463	43.8
2004	6170	38.2
2005	7493	21.4
2006	8634	15.2
2007	10729	24.3
2008	11832	10.3
2009	11136	-5.9
2010	14193	27.5
2011	16564	16.7
2012	17737	7.1
2013	18445	4.0
2014	20236	9.7
2015	21071	4.1
2016 (till June)	10865	6.5

*Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

Table No. 1 shows the Foreign Exchange Earnings from tourism in India during 1999 to till June 2016. Except three years i.e. 2001, 2002 and 2009 in all other years' positive growth trend is observed as per the given statistics. High growth in terms of percentage of change over previous years were found in 2003 with 43.8% followed by 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2011 and so on and so forth.

Table No: 2 Top 10 Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA's) to India in 2015

S. No.	Country	FTAs	Percentage (%) of share
1.	United States	1213624	15.12
2.	Bangladesh	1133879	14.13
3.	United Kingdom	867601	10.81
4.	Sri Lanka	299513	3.73
5.	Canada	281306	3.50
6.	Malaysia	272941	3.40
7.	Australia	263101	3.28
8.	Germany	248314	3.09
9.	France	230854	2.88
10.	Japan	207415	2.58

Total top 10 Country	5018548	62.52
Others	3008585	37.48
Total	8027133	100.00

*Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

Table No. 2 expresses clearly about the top 10 Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA's) to India in 2015. USA occupied 1st place with 15.12% followed by Bangladesh (14.13%) and United Kingdom (10.81%) respectively. Japan has stood at bottom i.e. 10th place in the top ten countries with 2.58% pertaining to the Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA's).

Furthermore, out of 100% of FTA's to India, 62.58% bagged by top 10 countries and the rest of the 37.48% is for other countries who visited in 2015.

Table No. 3 Share of Top 10 Countries of the World and India in International Tourist Arrivals in 2015

Rank	Country	International Tourist Arrivals in million	Percentage (%) Share
1	France	84.5	7.14
2	USA	77.5	6.55
3	Spain	68.2	5.76
4	China	56.9	4.81
5	Italy	50.7	4.28
6	Turkey	36.2	3.06
7	UK	36.1	3.05
8	Germany	35.0	2.96
9	Mexico	32.1	2.71
10	Russian Federation	31.3	2.64
	Total of Top 10 Countries	508.5	42.96
	India	8.03	0.68
	Others	666.5	56.37
	Total	1184.0	100.00

*Source: Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India

Share of top 10 countries of the world and India in International Tourist Arrivals in 2015 is presented in table no. 3. France stood in 1st place with 7.14% followed by USA, Spain, and China with 6.55%, 5.76%, 4.8% respectively. The Russian federation is placed at 10th with 2.64% in the top 10 countries.

In case of India, it is not a rosy picture in the international tourist arrivals comparatively with top 10 countries and also the table gives statistics i.e. 56.37% which is more than half belongs to other nations occupancy as far as International Tourist Arrivals are concerned.

India is trying to raise the share of foreign travel arrivals to 1% of total global tourists over the next couple of years, from 0.68%.

Issues & Challenges of Tourism Industry in India:

- Lack of strong and proper marketing:** Few years back there was no campaign with regard to tourism development but in recent years' promotional campaigns like Incredible India and 'Athiti Devo Bhava' have been started. Both these campaign are missing out the welcoming aspect for tourists in India. The main focus is on promotion of art and culture and thus not advertising adventure activities or activities related to fun and relaxation. There is an urgent need to look into the demands of present day tourists which varies widely and accordingly policies should be designed to cater to requirements of variety of tourists.
- Lack of Hygiene:** The neater and clean a destination is the more it is preferred by the tourists. This is probably a reason why a lot many tourists prefer areas like Europe, USA and France. India has always faced a problem of lack of hygiene in many of the important tourist places. This tends to hamper the flow of tourists who are willing to visit India. In India, many a time's roads, temples and even low-budget hotels are extremely dirty.
- Exorbitant Population:** With a huge population base in India comes the problem of poverty, unemployment. With these come the associated problems like pollution, frauds and crime of

different kinds. This actually promotes a downfall of international tourist in India.

- Language barrier:** The important issue of foreigners coming to India is language. Though India has the largest population of English speaking people, but normally the guides and other people who are there in the area of tourist attraction do not speak English and other native languages of foreign tourists. This creates a language gap between people and tourists and creates confusion as well.
- Lack of maintenance:** India has rich cultural and natural heritage but unfortunately most of these places are poorly maintained. Varanasi is an important religious center of India and thousands of tourist visit its ghats for a variety of purposes but these ghats are highly polluted and occupied by small vendors which tends to disturb the movement of tourists on these ghats. Many of our tourist centers are facing similar problems.
- Poor Management:** Most of the tourist centers are managed by some trusts but many a times ignorance on part of these trusts is visible. There are centers where the entire way to reach a tourist spot is narrow, dirty, heavily surrounded by shops. Many times such shopkeepers are unnecessarily harassing tourists which ultimately builds a bad image of our country.
- Lack of security:** It can be seen that at many places there is no adequate security for the tourists coming to visit these places. This situation can sometimes give rise to unwanted incidents. Therefore, it should be noted that provision of adequate security at different tourist sites should be a priority while making a tourism policy. Participation of locals in securing the tourist spots in their area is highly desirable.
- Corruption:** It has been observed that at many our tourist spots lot of corrupt activities is prevailing. It can be seen that people take bribes from visitors for quick darshans in various temples. It has been noticed that sometimes by taking bribes they allow entry or allow clicking of photographs at restricted places. There are vendors who will charge exorbitant price for different items which are really cheap in Indian market from foreigners. This is not a healthy symbol and therefore such activities should be curbed.

The Government of India has done a lot to upgrade and promote its tourism sector and has spent nearly US\$ 15.70 million especially on campaigns like "Incredible India" (Tourism statistics, 2007). Despite making these efforts India still face a tough competition from its neighbor China which ranks third in tourism rankings. There are different areas which are being looked at by different nations in order to promote tourism. These are mainly:

- Promotion of Domestic tourism.
- Promotion of their country as round the year destination instead of being season specific.
- Promotion of tourism by giving plenty of information about their country on internet, phone apps, television, movies etc.
- In depth and Profound research- India must conduct an in depth and multidimensional research time to time both in India and outside of India to understand the real reasons which are keeping tourists away from visiting this incredible nation.
- Building better and new advertising campaigns.
- Nowadays many nations promote tourism in their country by hosting major events like Olympics, in order to increase the tourist arrivals.
- Development of world class hotels, better infrastructure in terms of good connecting road and rail as well as air services.
- In many countries there are destinations which are unexplored. Identification and development of newer and less known sites. Recently these have been developed as new tourist destination to promote tourism. This element of surprise is going to attract tourist more towards India. If the tourists know that they are going to experience something very new than they will visit for sure.
- For promotion of tourism, schemes and holiday packages for both domestic and international tourists are being given.
- Promotion of visa friendly policies.
- Organizing different cultural festivals and events to attract tourists like KumbhMela in Allahbad, desert festival in Jaisalmer in India.
- Training and development of human resources seems a very crucial step.
- Developing a strong security cover.

The above mentioned areas have to be promoted in India. Ministry of tourism has to look into these aspects to promote its tourism sector. It is highly essential that these future areas have to be identified and proper planning has to be done followed by strong implementation. Tourism is presently the largest contributor to Indian economy and to further strengthen our economy technological advancement in this sector is required. It is dangerous to ignore this sector in fact we have to take sufficient steps to promote this upcoming sector. It is important to identify the strength and weakness of our country with respect to tourism. We have a rich cultural heritage, variety of architecture, food items, wonderful hospitality and other associated services, it is in comparison to many a slightly inexpensive country and provides a perfect blend of traditional and modern shopping experiences which provides us a good impetus in the tourism market on the other hand poor infrastructure at many tourist places, poor hygiene and cleanliness, pollution and lack of are the major weaknesses of the Indian tourism sector.

We have to make all possible efforts to correct these weaknesses. Once we are successful in correcting them we can make India a strong tourist destination and it can drastically improve our ranking amongst different countries.

Conclusion:

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries at the moment and this fact cannot be neglected at any cost. Therefore, suitable policy frameworks are requiring to capture this benefit and make large scale economic use of it. But we have to make sure that this economic growth is taking into account the growing demands for sustainability. Promotion of sustainability is the major challenge for tourism industry and its long term survival depends on how fast and efficiently we can overcome the handicaps in promotion of a sustainable tourism industry considering the interest of all the stakeholders. A greater sensitization for protecting our environment and local culture is mandatory in coordination with local and communities. Strong educational system is to be developed to build skilled manpower for tourism industry. In Hotel management curriculum sustainable tourism should be a strong feature. And at last but not the least we all should follow our moral responsibility to protect the environment and promote sustainability in our country.

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