



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Geography

NEW POSSIBILITIES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN AJMER DISTRICT

KEY WORDS: Tourist, tourism, infrastructure, accommodation, experience, travel.

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ABSTRACT Ajmer is Rajasthan’s most important site in terms of Islamic and hindu history and heritage. It contains pilgrimage centres for both hindus and muslims. The study aims new possibilities of tourism development in Ajmer district by discussing tourist potentials, work done, strategies and undergoing projects under government. **Methodology** used in this is based on both secondary and primary data. Secondary data in the form of publications, government reports and policy positions is used during the analysis and interpretation of the data. Primary data through observations, interviews, informations gathered from tourists, shopkeepers, hoteliers to seek their views with regard to tourist attraction.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a major global activity that has grown by 25 per cent in the past 10 years. The growing success of tourism industry lies in its natural and created resources which draw tourists towards them. A tourist is a person who spends money and visits another country for a period of not less than six months for legitimate, non immigrant and certain purpose such as sight-seeing, recreation, sports, health, study, pilgrimage, business, official duties, conferences, expeditions, mission, photography, shooting, film-shooting, family reasons. Today, tourism constitutes an important industry that has opened up new vision for the play of economics emancipation providing a very useful contribution and strengthening in developing the financial resources of a nation. Besides, tourism obtain foreign exchange in the form of invisible export, which results in manifold progress of the nation. Thus, tourism is a process in which mutual, material and mental benefits build up.

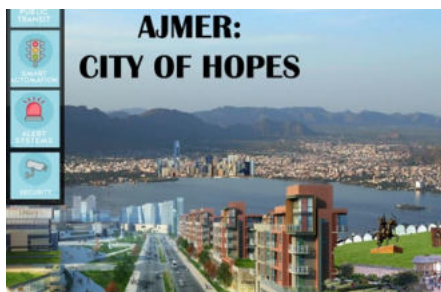
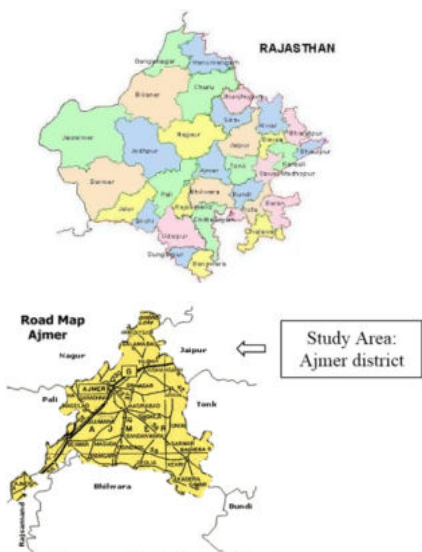
Temple (also known as Soniji Ki Nasiyan) is another must-visit tourist place in Ajmer.

Shah Jahan’s Mosque is the most beautiful of all the structures in the Dargah precinct. It is made of white marble, delicately carved with trellis work.

Ana Sagar is a manmade lake in Ajmer. Daulat Bagh is located next to Ana Sagar and is a nice place to relax. There are marble monuments by the shore and plenty snack items can be bought from local vendors. Boating facilities are also available at the lake. Tourist can also visit Emperor Akbar’s royal residence which is now converted to a museum which showcases an excellent collection of Mughal and Rajput armour and some fine sculpture.

The City is strategically located between important tourist route of the state, i.e. Jaipur- Jodhpur and Jaipur-Udaipur. Besides, traditionally Ajmer has been an important education centre in the region. Mayo College (1875), Sophia School (1919), Government College are premier institutes in the city imparting knowledge since the last century.

On the radar of the Central Government and with a lot of support from Rajasthan government.



The historic city of Ajmer is situated in the geographic centre of Rajasthan and lies about 135 kms south-west of the state capital, Jaipur. The strategic position of this city has been the key to its long and rather turbulent history. Few cities in India can boast of Ajmer’s religious significance for both Hindus and Muslims, with its glorious history replete with Rajput chivalry and Muslim supremacy and its picturesque setting. The holy Sufi shrine of Dargah Sharif is a venerated place of pilgrimage for people from all faiths. Constructed in 1236 AD, the shrine is dedicated to Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti, a famous Persian Sufi saint. Once inside the dargah, the smell of flowers and incense sticks takes over and bring upon a sense of spiritual bliss.

Ajmer is all set to become India's earliest smart city. Tourist destinations, which attract many visitors, will be able to get connected by setting-up Wi-Fi hotspots. It will also build interactive booths, increase vigilance with video cameras and environmental sensors to give correct updates on temperature and humidity, etc. All the utilities like water, electricity and gas are connected and made smart. The city will get a much-delayed overhaul of its civic amenities, especially sewage. This is apart from building necessary roads and flyovers to make it easier for future society to inhabit it.

The beautiful 12th century artificial lake Ana Sagar is another favorite tourist hangout. Guarding the city of Ajmer standing tall is one of the oldest hill forts in the world – the Taragarh fort which used to be the seat of Chauhan dynasty. The revered Ajmer Jain

Table 1.1

OBSERVATION OF STUDY THROUGH RANDOM SURVEY			
TRAVELLING STYLE			
S.no.	Composition	No. of respondents	% of respondents
1	Alone	24	16.00
2	special group	34	22.67
3	Family	44	29.33
4	Tourist group	48	32.00
	Total	150	100

Fig 1.1

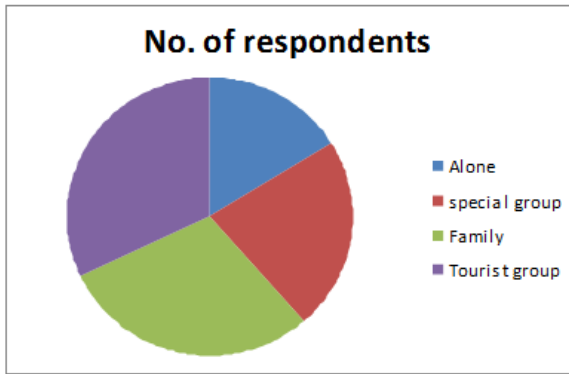


Table 1.2

SOURCES INFLUENCING THE VISIT TO AJMER		
Composition	No. of respondents	% of respondents
Friends	29	19.35
Relatives	17	11.33
Tourist offices	43	28.66
Forest offices	8	5.33
Newspaper	18	12.00
Magazine	26	17.33
Websites	9	6.00
Total	150	100

Fig 1.2

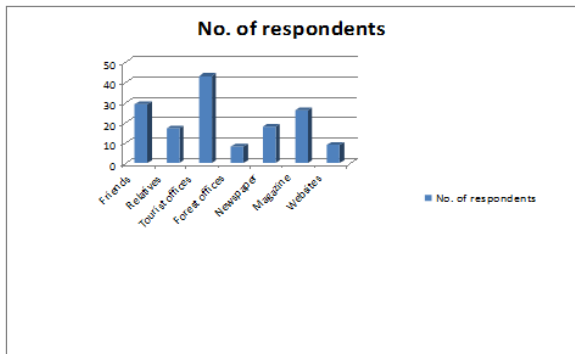
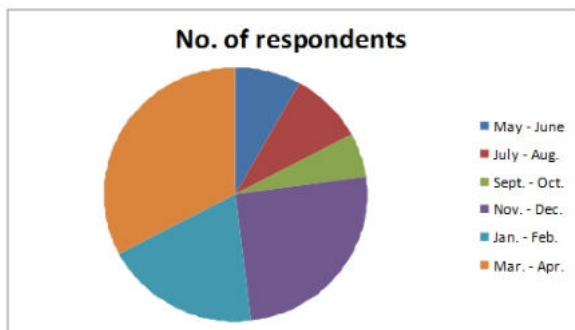


Table 1.3

BEST SEASON TO TRAVEL AJMER			
S.no.	Composition	No. of respondents	% of respondents
1	May - June	12	8
2	July - Aug.	14	9.33
3	Sept. - Oct.	8	5.33
4	Nov. - Dec.	38	25.33
5	Jan. - Feb.	29	19.33
6	Mar. - Apr.	49	32.68
	Total	150	100



The Central government is looking into the possibilities of developing potentialities in Ajmer district for tourism.

- The Foy Sagar area of Ajmer will be developed as a center for water sports. There will also be a ropeway ride in Pushkar.
- The new airport at Kishangarh, a city in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan has been thoughtfully planned to cater to the needs of the passengers and its neighbouring areas. Having adopted smart green initiatives, fulfilling Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and contributing its bit to art and culture, the airport has set a benchmark for all upcoming facilities.
- The district administration is planning to construct helipad near the Khwaja Moinudin Chishty dargah.
- Now, CCTV cameras will aid the police department to curb crime in the holy city of Ajmer where an average of 10,000 devotees come daily to worship in the dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti. The police department has already identified the important places to install about 500 CCTV cameras which will be controlled directly by the office of inspector general of police, Ajmer range.
- Nestled in the embrace of Aravalli hills, Ajmer known by Ajmer Sharif dargah and only temple of Lord Brahma in nearby Pushkar, is witnessing a major change
- Major technology driven projects designed for acity include two satellite railway stations on either side of the present station.
- Development of the historical Subhash Udhyan park in process.
- Other development work on a science park, heritage film museum, auditorium and food park.
- The Bawari, or water source was developed by Mughals to conserve rain water coming from nearby hills. The spot will be transformed into a place of public attraction.
- Proposal to beautify Anasagar lake and developing the place as a tourist spot is also under process.
- A visit to unattended Roothie Rani-KaMahal situated in the midst of Aravalli range behind the Taragarh fort, which was abode of poetess Meerabai, can become a reality. And, a circular pathway of 5.5 km around the lake Anasagar might give a feel of a walk in Manhattan! These projects are meant to revive the centuries old heritage with a blend of modern infrastructure. The planning and work has already begun like in Naya Bazaar, which is set for a new look, and the pathway around the lake.
- Likewise, modernisation of central bus stand and providing Wi-Fi at public places is also in the pipeline.
- Steps to beautify the Nanchal Bawari, which lies at the entrance of Ajmer. The Bawari (water source) was developed by Mughals to conserve rain water coming from nearby hills. The spot would be transformed into a place of public attraction.
- Ajmer station is now fully equipped with escalators on all of its platforms.
- Soon , Ajmer to have a state of art Biological Park in the hills of Nag Pahar Pushkar. The Government of Rajasthan is all set to add another feather to the Rajasthan Tourism. It will be developed on the land of Madhu Beed forest where wild animals are not kept in cages and have their own space. Not just that park will also have diverse plants found on hills and will have a kilometre long walkway along with bio-toilets and water harvesting system. The tourist visiting will be privileged to have a beautiful topography and dense forest.
- Now a baby feeding room for mothers waiting for trains on platform no.2 and 3 on Ajmer railway station. For mothers waiting on crowded platform of railway station the baby feeding room will provide them sense of pride and security.
- Dumping yard at Kishangarh is the beautiful dumping zone of marble slurry which looks like snow covered place, can be used as shooting destination, this dumping yard has become a picnic spot, film shooting location and bridal photo shoot location.
- Chief minister of Rajasthan announced upgradation of the Ajmer Municipal Council as Municipal Corporation and establishment of the Pushkar Pilgrimage Development Board and a national sanctuary in Tadgarh-Raoli, also facilities for

pilgrims visiting Pushkar and Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti's dargah would be enhanced, while wildlife tourism in Tadgarh-Raoli would be promoted in a big way.

- According to Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) a new scheme has been launched for the development and beautification of pilgrimage sites across the country to tap more tourists driven by religious sentiments. It is also to augment tourism infrastructure at places of pilgrimage to facilitate pilgrims tourists. This is aimed at "preserving and reviving the soul and unique character of the heritage city"

STRATEGIES UNDER GOVERNMENT

To make Ajmer an international tourist destination by historical, natural, cultural heritage in addition to present religious attractions following strategies are adopted :-

- To increase the flow of tourists to the city, it is recommended to improve connectivity of Ajmer to other major cities. Although, the city is well connected at the state level, there is a need to augment connectivity improvement at national level.
- Improve safety for tourists - The State government's Tourism Policy for promotion of Tourism ensures safety and security to the Tourists, improvement of law and order, Tourist Police, Code of Conduct, Complaint handling, for ensuring safe, hassle free stay for the tourist and tourist friendly destination.
- Community (individuals, owners, corporate s and institutions) involvement, through measures like fiscal incentives, grants for development and sponsorship schemes, and community awareness should be an integral and important component of the strategy.
- Capital works are recommended so as to improve facility to the tourist / pilgrims at the Vishram Sthali through provision of public convenience blocks, provision of drinking water, parking areas, etc.
- It is recommended to promote budget hotels and resorts in a way so as to promote overnight stay. Apart from this, it is recommended to promote single/multiple day package tours, with the City as base location. It is recommended to promote establishment of heritage properties and budget hotels, and associated facilities, with support form ITDC, RTDC, and private developers.
- **Promote new locations** - As a part of promotion strategy, it is recommended to develop and leverage new venue for revenue generation, from tourism, through establishment of Arts and Crafts village, Development of Location as picnic spot etc.

CONCLUSION

To achieve the goals and challenges set for the travel and tourism industry as it continues to grow throughout the coming decades, will require a strong and co-operative partnership between government departments, international and national trade associations, national tourism authorities, trade unions and the travel and tourism private sector. All stakeholders must to share the responsibility for prospect or vision of travel and tourism and deliver the following to ensure its sustainability :

Governments need to:

Integrate travel and tourism policy, especially the environment, into broader government policies.

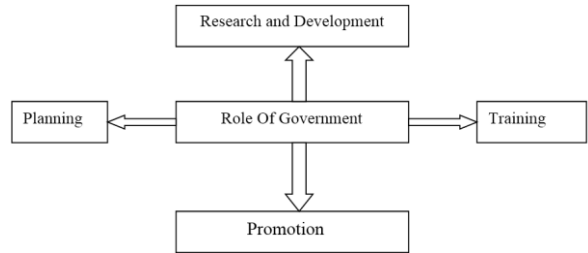
Set up realistic capacities within sustainability frameworks, which have been set in consultation with industry and other stakeholders.

Create incentives for the travel and tourism industry backed up where necessary by effective regulation.

Apply environmental taxes fairly and non discriminatorily, where needed. They should be carefully thought out to minimise their impact on economic development, and revenues should be allocated to travel- and tourism-associated environment improvement programmes.

Design policies creating incentives for corporate social

responsibility in tourism, favouring a sensitive and engaging approach towards the local communities at the destinations, especially in the developing countries.



Role Of The Government In The Tourism Industry

Suggestions :

- Tourism development plans should be integrated paying particular attention to environmental consideration.
- Renovation and reactivation of the infrastructure is needed.
- Tourists needs to respect the socio-cultural traditions.
- Steps should be taken to avoid any harassment and restrictions imposed on the tourists. A need for tourists sensitive policy is essential.
- The knowledge of the mechanism and benefits of tourism needs to be provided to all the components of tourism at Ajmer.
- Bi-lingual tourists information related boards should be present at tourists destinations.
- Efficient use of tourism facilities is needed. Incentive actions should be taken in both the public and private sectors to spread tourism demand over time and space.

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