

Role of Tourism in Economic Development of Rajasthan

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Abstract

Rajasthan State is one of the most attractive tourist destinations in India and has a prominent place on the world tourist map. It has varied tourist attraction for both domestic & international tourists. Rajasthan, which is a premier tourist destination attracts tourist for its historical forts, palaces, art and culture. In world scenario also, tourism has emerged as a biggest industry and posses great employment potential. The boost in the tourist arrivals have resulted in the swift growth of tourism sector in Rajasthan. The growth of tourism sector has resulted in employment generation, foreign exchange earnings, development of infrastructure facilities, capital investment, socio-economic growth, increasing in the contribution to GDP and so on. This paper is an effort to understand the perspective of tourism in economic development of Rajasthan and identify the factors influencing the growth of tourism. It also identifies the challenges and opportunities of tourism development in Rajasthan.

Keywords: Rajasthan, Tourism, Economic development, Challenges, Opportunities.

Introduction:

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 warrior princes – the land of regal creatures bird watcher and many more .Rajasthan is also called Rajputana, the land of kings because of the fact that it has been ruled by kings, mostly Rajputas, historically for a very long time during pre-Muslim era. Substantial part of the state is deserted because of prominent presence the Thar Desert. Because of the two reasons, the most famous tourism attractions in Rajasthan are either the forts, palaces or the deserted parts and the associated activities like safari in jeep and on animals in the deserts etc. Delhi, Agra and Jaipur form a tourist circuit called the Golden Triangle. The most visited places in Rajasthan are but not limited to, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Ajmer, Pushkar, Bikaner, Neemrana and Mount Abu. Apart from the famous forts, palaces, havelis, desert, Aravalli (hill) Range etc., Rajasthan also has to offer to its tourists the world famous Keoladeo National Park of Bharatpur, Sariska Tiger Reserve of Alwar, Ranthambore National Park of Sawai Madhopur, and Desert National Park of Jaisalmer. The state government of Rajasthan introduces many new tourism products such as eco-tourism, a canal cruise

in river Chambale, camel and horse safaris, camp tourism, new package tours at reasonable rates, special tax rebates and exemptions for the tourism sector. Tourism occupies a prominent place in the state's agenda as a crucial engine for income and employment. Tourism also promotes communal harmony and national unity. Seeing the significance of tourism in the economic development, the Government has taken various policy measures for establishing tourism as a "People's Industry". Though, commercialisation of tourism is necessary in Rajasthan, it is also well understood that tourism promotes culture. The state Government in the recent past has made efforts for the maximum benefit from tourism sector. Public and private sector have been jointly promoting the tourism in the state and have made productive efforts to exploit the vast potential of tourism sector.

Types of tourism in Rajasthan:

Heritage tourism:

It is a branch of tourism that attracts tourists due to cultural diversity and glorious past of that place.

Desert tourism:

The wealth of their heritage, the people who inhabit them and the magic of their panoramas make deserts very attractive areas for tourism.

Cultural tourism:

It is concerned with communities who have diverse customs and practices that attract tourists.

Adventure tourism:

It includes visiting places which have a rich diversity in terms of climate and topography providing opportunities like rock climbing, skiing, rafting and tracking etc.

Eco tourism:

It is a dimension of tourism related to tourism which promotes activities that do not disturb the environment. It includes travelling to areas to understand the culture and history of the environment simultaneously ensuring that the ecological balance is not altered or disturbed.

Spiritual tourism:

Spiritual Tourism refers to places where people travel due to their beliefs and faith. Tourists visit such destinations in search of religion and spirituality.

Objectives

1. To examine the factors influencing the growth of tourism.
2. To examine the contribution of tourism in Rajasthan economy.
3. To identify the challenges and opportunities of tourism development in Rajasthan.

Research Methodology

The information in the study is collected from secondary sources that are from various online sources, websites, articles, Reports, Books related to tourism in Rajasthan.

Review of Literature

Brian et. al. (1993) in his study Social Impacts of Tourism has concluded that the people dependent on tourism can clearly identify the differences between economic benefits and social costs but even this awareness does not stop the further development of tourism.

Peggy.T, in her study (1994) Assessing socio-cultural impacts: the case of Singapore highlights both positive and negative impacts of tourism. This study examines how far these effects are tilting perceptions of tourism from an acceptable to an unacceptable manner and suggest the ways to reduce negative impacts.

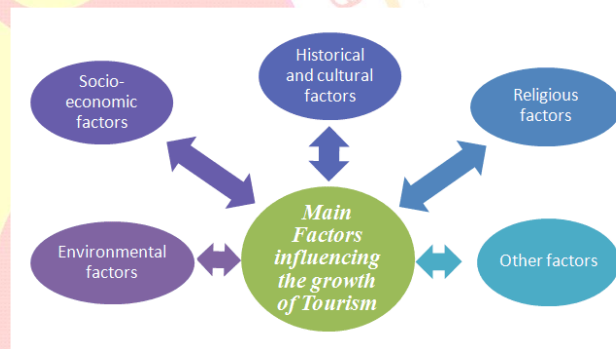
Nazma (2008) in her study “Socio-cultural impacts of Tourism on the rural areas within the

world Heritage sites”, has suggested various approaches to protect the local culture from degradation. And also this study focuses on the ways to manage the impacts of socio-cultural change.

Bartwal (2008) in his article discusses that despite numerous efforts through "Incredible India" campaign, India is lacking tourist's figures. India is not able to flock a large number of visitors in its beaches, mountains and desert sands but does not talk about the methods to improve the present branding of Incredible India. There are many emerging dimensions in Indian tourism states and the various issues faced by Indian tourism industry, like infrastructure, lack of hygiene, high tariffs etc.

Factors Affecting Tourism

Studies reveal that following are the broad categories of factors that affect tourism.



Environmental factors

Two main environmental factors that have led to the growth of tourism:

Good climate:

Good climate is one of the most important features of attraction for any tourist place. Pleasant climate with warmth and ample of sunshine attracts tourists who come from the temperate and colder regions. In Rajasthan the desert environment in the Western parts of the state is also a major attraction for visitors, particularly for foreign tourist. 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.

Beautiful scenery:

Tourism booms at picnic spots with beautiful sceneries. For example, sunrise and sunset points, long sea beaches, fresh water lakes, waterfalls, etc., often attract large numbers of tourists. There are number of lakes in Rajasthan

which are popular for their pilgrimage place and tourist place for its natural surroundings and beauty which attracts tourists to visits these lakes. The famous lakes in Rajasthan are Pushkar Lake, Pichola Lake, Lake Fetch Sagar, Rajasamand Lake at Udaipur and Nakki Lake at Mount Abu.

Socio-economic factors

Accessibility:

All tourist centers must be easily accessible by various modes of transportation like roads, railways, air and water. To enjoy nature's beautiful sites seeing traveling by roads and railways are a better option. In Rajasthan major destinations are already on the rail map. At present, there are many famous trains run by Indian Railway with joint effort of RTDC to provide easy and cheapest convenience by rail to domestic and foreign tourists. The major luxury trains which attract tourists are the Palace on Wheels, the Fairy Queen, the Royal Orient and the Royal Rajasthan on Wheels. For easy conveyance of tourist the state will encourage air taxi service and helicopter service by air taxi operators within the state.

Accommodation:

Places of tourists' interest must be capable enough to provide good accommodation and catering facilities. A type of accommodation required by tourists depends on their lives-styles, standard of living, capacity to spend money, nature of services expected, etc. Hotels and motels provide an experience of Rajasthan with safety and security to the traveler. Variety of rooms such as suite, AC and non-AC, standard and tents provide rests to traveler. The hotels and motels are standardized for categorization in three to one star and heritage category. These hotels provide facilities of travel counters, shopping arcades, indoor and outdoor games for children and city sightseeing tours which make the stay in RTDC hotel a complete experience.

Amenities:

Growth of tourism at a particular place is also influenced crucial factors like; how well the site is maintained for touring activities like skiing, roping, paragliding, rowing, fishing, surfing, safari adventure, etc. The Rajasthan safari tours are fast becoming the preferred options for most tourists, especially the adventurous. The most popular safaris

are camel safari, horse safari, elephant ride and jeep safari.

Ancillary services:

If a tour destination is equipped by ancillary (supplementary) services like banking and finance, the Internet and telecom connectivity, hospitals, insurance, so on, then such a place succeeds to hold (retain) more tourists for a longer time. This overall helps to boost the local economy to some extent.

Religious factors

People often make pilgrims to places of religious importance to seek inner peace, get blessing of their favorite deities and gurus, attain salvation before death, etc. Here, faiths, beliefs and sentiments of people contribute in booming tourism at holy places. Rajasthan is undoubtedly the most charming and colorful state of the country acknowledged for its lively and colorful traditions, arts, heritage and culture. At the same time, Rajasthan is home to a number of religious communities that reside in peace and harmony here. People of various faiths including Hindus, Muslims, Jains and Christians have lived in perfect communal harmony for many centuries. Some of the famous pilgrimage sites in Rajasthan are Dargah Sharif in Ajmer, Dilwara temple in Mount Abu, Jain temples in Ranakpur, Karnimata temple in Deshnoke, Eklingji temple in Udaipur, Shrinathji temple at Nathdwara, Brahma temple in Pushkar and Govind Devji temple at Jaipur.

Contribution of tourism in Rajasthan Economy

Tourism makes a large contribution to the economy of Rajasthan in India. Recent hike in the figures of tourists to Rajasthan in India has proved that tourism is a vital source of income for the state of Rajasthan. One may not forget that many heritage hotels (old forts and palaces) all over Rajasthan are being run successfully for handsome amount of money and the considerable amount of tax being paid to the state government support the local economy and people of Rajasthan which would have not been possible without the tourists visiting to Rajasthan. Local transporters, hotels, shopkeepers, monuments, museums, guide and tour operators are just a few who survive through tourists. If proper efforts are taken, then 30% of the total population of Rajasthan can live from tourism. Rural tourism of

Rajasthan could bring enormous wealth to the villages of Rajasthan.

Tourism accounts for approximately 15 percent of Rajasthan economy and provides economic benefit like foreign exchange earnings, regional development, infrastructure development and promotion of local handicraft.

1. In Rajasthan tourism accounts for 2.7 percent (5.2 percent after adding indirect - tax) in Gross State Domestic product and 1.9 percent (7.2 percent after adding indirect effect) in state employment.
2. In a labour intensive industry such as tourism the greater proportion of income is likely to be derived from wages and salaries paid to those working in jobs either directly serving the needs of tourists or benefiting indirectly from tourists' spending.
3. Tourism has a significant multiplier effect on the state economy. It increases employment opportunities, generating revenue, developing infrastructure, increasing investment opportunities and revival of traditions and heritage conservation and management. It is estimated that every rupee spent by a tourist changes hands 13 times and that every hotel room generates direct employment to three persons and indirect employment to eight persons.
4. The tourism industry aids and supports the foreign exchange reserves. It benefits our state in generating foreign currency. Every year a large number of tourists visit Rajasthan. They visit places; stay and shop in our state. All this contributes to a significant amount of foreign currency generation.
5. In Rajasthan, tourism is the third largest employer after agriculture and textiles sector.
6. Tourism Industry is more gender neutral as compared to other Industries and women account for 65% of the international tourism workforce. For Rajasthan also tourism sector provides enabling platform for increasing labour force participation rate.

Challenges of Tourism Industry in Rajasthan

Despite its many tourists attractions, tourism has not been developed to its full potential in Rajasthan because of the following challenges:

Poor infrastructure:

Deficiencies of basic infrastructure which lies at the root of a series of serious problems, related to the development of tourism. In Rajasthan, most infra-structure development has been concentrated around industrial districts while tourist destinations have been neglected in this respect. The

maintenance of link roads other than national and state highways is extremely poor. The absence of intra-city air connectivity has been a major bundle. Connectivity has been a road block in attract tourist visiting Delhi -Agra -Jaipur. Accessibility to reach tribal remote areas is so poor that the tourism is not able to reach these areas.

Lack of innovativeness in marketing:

Rajasthan is one of the famous tourist destinations in the world but the tourism marketing is not so developed. There is no such promotional marketing activity about Rajasthan tourist attractions so that tourists can be attract towards Rajasthan. There is also no holding of cultural programmes in other state and countries of the world to make people aware about Rajasthan tourism.

Tourism policies instability:

The lack of any comprehensive policy for the development of tourism is one of the major factors responsible for the slow growth of tourism sector in Rajasthan.

Marketing lacunae:

Lack of aggressive outline and other marketing facilities on tourist places. There is no target oriented marketing in a planned manner is hampered the tourists.

Language problem:

Language can be one of the hindrances in tourism. Although Hindi is an official language, but in many parts of Rajasthan people do not understand it.

Trained tourist guide:

Availability of trained guide will be a problem. The guide plays a very important role in attracting tourists. The guide should have thorough knowledge about the place and he or she should able to generate interest in the mind of tourist to visit the site. The guide can show the album, video film, brochure to give knowledge about the places.

Lack of cleanliness at various monuments:

Apart from roads tourist visiting Rajasthan have stressed the need to provide basic amenities like clean toilet and other facilities. Udaipur is a very beautiful city an exotic local perfect holiday spot but also deals with dirty interiors of city .IN a recent survey Rajasthan's most well know lakes the Jalmahal - Jaisamand and Udaisagar are in the list of most severely polluted water bodies in the

country.

Lack of facilities provided by the government:

Tourism has been announced as the exports industry, but the facilities provided by the government to RTDC is not similar to the one provided to the other exports oriented units.

Opportunities of Tourism Industry in Rajasthan

Tourism in Rajasthan is one of the fast growing industries. There are many tourism products in the state which attracts tourists such as forts and palaces, shopping, safari tours, wildlife sanctuary parks, heritage and pilgrimage places, lakes in Rajasthan and many more. There are many popular tourist destinations in the state which attract tourists from India and abroad that include historic cities (Jaipur, Udaipur, Bikaner), wildlife sanctuaries (Sariska Ranthambore, Keoladeo) and desert locations (Jodhpur, Jaisalmer). Jaipur and other cities of Rajasthan have developed some unique selling proposition to attract domestic and foreign tourists. Some of the hotels of Rajasthan are providing traditional food in a very traditional style.

The state runs the 'Palace on Wheels', 'Heritage on Wheels' and luxury train 'Royal Rajasthan on Wheels', which is a famous attraction for foreign tourists. The government can promote medical tourism by providing super specialty medical facilities at a cheaper rates the government can also develop infrastructural facilities for promoting camp tourism and eco- friendly nature tourism. If efforts are made by RTDC to promote tourism, by means of adopting better marketing strategy, providing services at a cheaper and reasonable rate compared to that being provided by the other countries, then definitely the inflows of foreign tourists will go up from the present level. If this is achieved than the tourism industry in Rajasthan will be greatly benefitted. Thus it can be said that tourism industry in Rajasthan is a very important economic activity, which has direct and indirect impact on economic, social and cultural life of the people.

Conclusion

Tourism is a triadic composition of social, natural and the cultural phenomenon, which is

emerging as the world's largest employment generating industry. Tourism in Rajasthan offer many unique products such as forts and palaces, heritage hotels, colorful fairs and festivals, local art and handicrafts. The total number of foreign tourist arrivals in the state has increased. It showed an increasing trend except few years during the study period. No doubt tourism industry in Rajasthan suffers some social and environmental problems. Though it is true that the state government is giving concentration both on the development of the tourism and activities related to tourism industry in Rajasthan.

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