

Problems and Solutions of Tourism Development in India A Geographical Study

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Abstract

Tourism has become the biggest industry in the world today. In this case, India's natural, cultural and historical heritage makes it a very important area from the point of view of tourism. Today India is known for various categories of tourism, such as adventure tourism, medical tourism, eco-tourism, rural tourism, etc. It is known that in India from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Arunachal Pradesh to Gujarat, each region has its own specialty and culture. These regions have the potential to attract tourists with their natural features like cold/hot deserts (Ladakh/Rajasthan), rivers (Ganga and Brahmaputra), forests (Niligiri and North East), islands (Andaman and Nicobar), mountains and plateaus etc. . Also, the wide variety of landscapes and cultural heritage found here provide many options for tourists coming from abroad. Even today, in some countries of the world (such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar etc.) where followers of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism live in large numbers. Significantly, being the birthplace of the originator of these religions, there are a large number of holy and religious tourist places here, due to which a large number of tourists from South East and East Asian countries are being attracted.

Current Status of Tourism in India

In the report of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), 2018, India has been ranked third in the world in terms of tourism. The report looked at the performance of 185 countries over the past seven years (2011-2017). The four main pillars of this report were-

- ★ Total contribution to GDP
- ★ international travel expenses
- ★ domestic travel expenses and
- ★ capital investment

In terms of being able to raise its position on these four levels, it can be said to be a great achievement for India. In the year 2017, India earned about \$23 billion in revenue from tourism, which is targeted to reach \$100 billion by 2023. This is higher than in France and Spain. It is worth mentioning that in 2017, 1.4 crore foreign tourists visited India, while in 2014 the same figure was 76.8 lakh. In this context, India registered an annual growth of 14 percent on the tourism front, which is much higher than the global average of 6.8 percent and the Asian average of 5.7 percent. However, the growth of domestic tourism was only 2.3 per cent. The contribution of tourism to the GDP was 7 percent. According to the World Economic Forum, India has jumped 25 places in the last four years in the tourism competitiveness index. The credit for this goes to the efforts of the government, due to which the number of foreign and domestic travelers in India has increased a lot.

Corona virus epidemic and tourism industry :-

Tourism provides livelihood opportunities for millions of people around the world and provides opportunities for many more to experience different cultures and natural beauty from close quarters.

Significantly, the global tourism industry is one of the most affected due to the pandemic and the pandemic has affected the industry at various levels.

Economic effect :-

According to the statistics of the year 2019, this year the tourism industry contributed a total of 7 percent of the global trade and employed one out of every ten people.

The first five months of the year 2020 has seen a total decrease of 56 per cent in international tourist traffic due to closure of international borders, closure of hotels and fall in air travel, which is three times more than the global economic crisis of 2009. times more.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the current scenario in the region suggests that the total number of international tourists may decline by 58-78 percent in 2020, leading to a reduction in visitor spending. It is expected to be in the range of \$310-570 billion, compared to around \$1.5 trillion in 2019.

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The World Tourism Organization estimates that the pandemic has threatened the employment of approximately 100 million people related to the tourism industry globally.

Impact on Livelihood :-

The impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry is also likely to increase poverty (SDG 1) and inequality (SDG 10), in addition to negatively impacting nature and cultural conservation efforts globally.

It is noteworthy that the pandemic has also slowed down the pace of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The tourism industry has always been a major source of income for women, rural communities and other disadvantaged groups, and the impact of the pandemic on this industry has created a livelihood crisis for these people as well.

Cultural influence: -

The impact of the pandemic on the tourism industry puts considerable strain on heritage conservation efforts in the cultural sector and on the cultural and social fabric of communities, especially indigenous peoples and ethnic groups.

For example, the closure of markets for handicraft products and products related to embroidery and knitting has had a significant impact on the revenue of rural people, especially indigenous women.

Tourism is one of the major vehicles to promote culture and develop mutual dialogue and understanding, but due to the impact of the pandemic, cultural exchange and dialogue have come to a standstill.

India and tourism industry :-

The tourism and hospitality industry has a huge impact on the Indian economy and this industry plays an important role in the development of the Indian economy.

According to statistics, the tourism industry of India has provided employment to a total of more than 42 million people, which is about 8.1 percent of the total employment opportunities in India.

In the year 2019, India's tourism industry contributed about 9.3 percent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and accounted for 5.9 percent of total investment.

Experts believe that this sector is capable of providing quality employment to millions of people, which is very important for a country like India, where 72 percent of the population is below 32 years of age and the average age is 29 years.

There is amazing diversity in relation to the tourism sector in India. There are a total of 38 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India, which make India very important from the point of view of tourism.

Problems related to Indian tourism industry : -

Complicated Visa Process: Despite the introduction of e-Visa facility, most tourists and visitors to India still find the process of applying for a visa to be cumbersome and complicated. This visa process has become even more complicated during the pandemic.

Infrastructure and connectivity issues: Often due to lack of infrastructure and inadequate connectivity, many times tourists face difficulties to visit some heritage sites. For example, many tourist places like Kangchenjunga are still not easily accessible to the common people.

Lack of Publicity and Awareness: Though the past few years have seen a lot of growth in the promotion of India's tourism sector, still there is a clear lack of publicity and awareness about tourist places in India on online platforms.

Tourist information centers are not properly managed, making it very difficult for domestic and foreign tourists to get the necessary information.

Lack of required skills: The lack of adequately trained manpower for the tourism and hospitality sector is a major challenge for India's tourism industry, which makes it difficult to provide world-class experiences to tourists visiting India.

Tourist Security: Foreign tourists coming to India often face robbery and theft etc., due to which a negative image arises in their minds about India and the law and order of the country.

domestic tourism

The growth rate in domestic tourist visits has declined from 12.7 per cent in 2016 to 2.4 per cent in 2017.

The total number of domestic tourists in 2017 was 1652.5 million as compared to 1,615.4 million in 2016.

The top 5 destination states are Tamil Nadu (345.1 million), Uttar Pradesh (234 million), Karnataka (180 million), Andhra Pradesh (165.4 million) and Maharashtra (119.2 million) which accounts for 63.2 percent of the total number of domestic tourism visits in 2017.

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The most visited monuments in 2017-18 for domestic tourists from centrally protected entry ticketed monuments are Taj Mahal, Agra (5.66 million), Sun Temple, Konark (3.22 million) and Red Fort, Delhi (3.04 million) are.

Importance of tourism industry in India

Tourism is a huge industry globally. It creates employment opportunities in many sectors as well as helps in growing the economy rapidly. Its importance can only be estimated from the fact that the number of tourists worldwide has increased to 123 crores in the year 2016 as compared to 2.5 crores in the year 1950.

It may be recalled that in the year 2014, the share of tourism in the global economy was 9.4 percent. At the same time, in terms of contribution to GDP in places like Mauritius, Singapore and Dubai, the tourism industry stood second.

Talking about statistics, about 4.27 crore people have got employment directly or indirectly in the tourism sector. According to a recent report released by FICCI, India is expected to create 1 million jobs in the travel and tourism sector this year.

According to the report, 10 lakh jobs are expected to be created in this sector every year till 2029. By the end of 2019, the business of this sector in India is expected to increase to Rs 35.40 lakh crore, which was around Rs 17 lakh crore last year.

It is noteworthy that after the boom in the travel and tourism industry, the hospitality sector has also made a lot of progress in the last five-six years.

Tourism has also opened the window of many employment opportunities for women in India.

It should be noted that at the global level, almost double the number of women are employed in the tourism sector as compared to other sectors. From this point of view, the tourism sector has also been a means of supporting equality and social justice in the society.

Today India's tourism industry is expanding beyond its traditional confines to areas such as medicine and yoga. As a result, the door of new possibilities and opportunities has opened for India.

government effort

Due to India's vast geographical structure and rich historical heritage, there is ample scope for development of tourism sector. For these reasons, many schemes have been implemented by the Government of India to improve this sector. The following points-

'Swadesh Darshan Yojana', 'Hriday' scheme for development of heritage sites and 'Prasad' scheme for development of religious tourist places have been brought in the country for the development of tourism circuit. Apart from this, emphasis has been laid on construction of ropeways at tourist places and development of commercial land around railway stations and logistic parks.

With an emphasis on easing the arrival of foreign tourists, the government has launched the e-Visa system for 166 countries. It may be noted that as a sequel to this, a reduction in the e-Visa (Electronic Visa) fee has been proposed by the Ministry of Tourism in the recent Ministerial Conference.

As per the proposed scheme, a new 5-year visa scheme was announced and the e-Visa fee has been kept in check with the option of short term as well as long term tourist e-Visa scheme.

It is worth mentioning that moving in this direction, the government has recently abolished the compulsion for foreigners to register at the Foreigners Registration Office within 24 hours of their arrival in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

To attract foreigners, the Ministry of Tourism is also developing regions like the North East in such a way that they become accessible, safe and attractive destinations.

The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India organized an 'International Tourism Mart' at Agartala, Tripura from 22-24 November, 2018. The main purpose of this event is to increase tourism in the North East states.

The government has also paid a lot of attention to the development and maintenance of infrastructure of major tourist places. 'Swadesh Darshan' and 'Prasad Yojana', two new such schemes have been launched, which will develop tourism related infrastructure in the country.

On the other hand, through the 'Dharohar God Lo' scheme, some heritage has been adopted by the corporate world etc. Its objective is to connect people to their heritage by developing a sense of responsibility towards it.

'The Heritage Trail' to popularize Indian heritage abroad, 'Dekho Apna Desh', a tourism festival to make Indians aware of their country, and 'Tourism for All', a tourism festival in special places of the states. has been organized. Apart from this, a workshop on tourism and governance is also being organized.

Recently, the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification & IITFC portal has been launched by the government in this direction.

The IITFC program is a digital initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India for the citizens of the country to become a part of the rapidly growing tourism industry. It is an online program under which any person can get information about tourist places, timings and facilities etc.

Apart from this, the government also launched the Hindi version of the new portal of 'Incredible India'. It may be noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also been made the brand ambassador of 'Incredible India' by the Ministry of Tourism.

other efforts

The present central government has taken initiative to develop 50 tourist places of international standard. Places like the Red Fort in Delhi are being leased out to the private sector to develop world-class facilities.

Keeping in view the arrival of two crore foreign tourists by the year 2020, emphasis is being laid on increasing basic facilities by marking tourist places like Sanchi Stupa in Madhya Pradesh, Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh and Bodh Gaya in Bihar.

With a view to promote tourism, especially night tourism in the country, the Ministry of Culture has decided to keep 10 historical monuments across the country open for visitors till 9 pm.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to open a total of 137 peaks for foreign tourists out of which 51 are in Uttarakhand, 24 in Sikkim, 47 in Himachal Pradesh and 15 in Jammu and Kashmir. These peaks also include Doonagiri with a height of 7066 meters and Kanjanjunga with a height of 8,589 meters.

the challenges

Despite the top-notch facilities provided by the Government of India to tourists, a well-developed tourism system faces a number of challenges. Some of them are as follows-

Lack of infrastructure remains a major challenge for the Indian tourism sector. Economic and social infrastructure related to tourism, hotels, connectivity, human resources, health facilities, etc. are largely under development in India. The main reason for this apathy is the inadequate allocation of financial resources. It is worth mentioning that in the budget of 2017-18, the government has allocated only Rs 1840 crore for a big sector like tourism.

The filth spread in major tourist places of the country is another problem. A large number of tourists from western countries do not like to come to India just because there is filth all around.

Security of tourists, especially foreign tourists, has been a major hindrance in the path of tourism development. Attacks on foreign nationals, especially women, raise some questions about India's ability to welcome tourists from distant countries. It is noteworthy that India was ranked 114th in terms of security aspects in the World Economic Forum Index 2017 out of 130 countries surveyed.

Most of the tourist places in the country are still inaccessible to the poor, women and the elderly. This is due to the high cost of travel, poor connectivity and a series of permissions required for various reasons.

India has not got the same success in highlighting its rich cultural heritage as the countries of the West, especially the European countries.

Health tourism, yoga, naturopathy, adventure tourism, despite immense possibilities, have received less attention in these areas.

Although private sector people are earning well in yoga, naturopathy and adventure tourism, but the state governments have not been able to take advantage of them by tying them in one formula. Some work is going on but at a very slow pace. For example, 40 helipads are proposed to be built, but work has been done on only a few.

The Chardham Yatra route has not yet been made convenient for vehicles despite adequate budget after last year's disaster. For the same tracking, new routes have not been made for many years etc.

World Tourism Day is celebrated across the world on 27 September every year. The main purpose of organizing this day is to make people around the world aware of tourism. The year 2020 marks the 40th anniversary of World Tourism Day. It is noteworthy that World Tourism Day provides an opportunity to recognize the potential of tourism in building the future. The day was first established by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in 1980, and since then a different country has hosted World Tourism Day each year. It may be noted that India had hosted this day in the year 2019.

world tourism day 2020

For the year 2020, the theme of World Tourism Day has been kept 'Tourism and Rural Development'. The theme highlights the role of tourism in providing employment and development opportunities outside large cities, and in preserving cultural and natural heritage around the world. Ministry of Tourism in India organized World Tourism Day on September 27, 2020 through virtual medium. During this program, Chief Guest and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also launched an application named 'SAATHI'.

'Saathi' application :-

'Saathi' application is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism along with the Quality Council of India to operate the hospitality industry safely and instill confidence among staff and guests regarding the safety of hotels. has been launched to help the hospitality industry.

Conclusion and suggestion :-

After the end of the epidemic, the government will have to pay special attention to the cleanliness of heritage sites so that the attention of tourists can be attracted towards Indian heritage sites. Along with this, the government should also encourage the domestic tourism industry. It is necessary to pay attention to the infrastructure development of tourist places and their connectivity, so that the travelers do not face difficulty in visiting any tourist place. Along with this, it is necessary to train people on a large scale to work in the tourism sector, so that world-class facilities can be provided to the tourists. To develop better health infrastructure to deal with any kind of health challenges at tourist places. In conclusion, it can be said that the efforts being made by the government for development in the tourism sector are commendable. The following are some of the major suggestions that can be implemented to deal with the challenges related to tourism at present - The government should encourage private sector participation as a key driver of inclusive growth for the overall development of the tourism sector. should be encouraged in a big way. There is a need for better engagement between the central and state governments, as well as the private sector. Above all, the safety of tourists should be ensured. "It is a good sign that the present government, recognizing its potential in 2014 itself, has done a lot of work on this front during the last five years, which needs to be given sustained momentum. Slogans like 'Incredible India' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava' should be publicized with comprehensive plans. Under this, a large number of affordable hotels should be constructed, new types of options should also be prepared for entertainment. Adventure tourism should also be focused to attract more and more tourists. In terms of tourism development, the condition of other states is not very good except for a few states of the country. In such a situation, lessons should be taken from the states which give impetus to economic development through tourism. The old centers of tourism have become the medium of income of the states, while the tourist places with immense possibilities are still not in the knowledge of the tourists. If Uttarakhand is to be assessed, then the state has not achieved any special achievement in the last ten years in terms of tourism. While there are possibilities of multidimensional tourism in the state. A plan should be made regarding this. UDAN scheme should be extended to more and more airports. For this the private sector should help in improving it. All the States and Union Territories with the help of the Archaeological Survey of India (AS) should ensure that UNESCO standards are followed while making proposals for their heritage sites. The state government should develop all its destinations in a phased manner in view of the increasing trends of tourists every year and also raise funds at its own level. Connectivity from metros to tourist destinations to double our tourism numbers and contribute to overall development. Also, the religious places should be uploaded on the website of the tourism department. Apart from this, the government should make the world aware of the beauty of Indian yoga, medicine, culture, ideology, inaccessible areas like mountains, plateaus, lakes, rivers etc.

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