

BA (P) GEOGRAPHY DISCIPLINE

SEMESTER VI

GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM

Unit 4: RECENT TRENDS OF TOURISM: DOMESTIC (INDIA)

INTRODUCTION

Tourism industry in India is on a great boom at the moment. **Tourism in India** is important for the country's economic growth. India has tremendous potential to become a major global tourist destination and Indian tourism industry is exploiting this potential to the hilt. Travel and tourism industry is the second highest foreign exchange earner for India and the government has given travel and tourism organizations export house status.

The buoyancy in the Indian tourism industry can be attributed to several factors.

- 1) Firstly, the tremendous growth of Indian economy has resulted in more disposable income in the hands of middle class, thereby prompting increasingly large number of people to spend money on vacations abroad or at home.
- 2) In second, India is a booming IT hub and more and more people are coming to India on business trips.
- 3) In third, aggressive advertising campaign "Incredible India" by Tourism Ministry has played a major role in changing the image of India from that of the land of snake charmers to a hot and happening place and has sparked renewed interest among foreign travellers. Travel and tourism industry's contribution to Indian industry is immense. Tourism is one of the main foreign exchange earners and contributes to the economy indirectly through its linkages with other sectors like horticulture, agriculture, poultry, handicrafts and construction. Tourism industry also provides employment to millions of people in India both directly and indirectly through its linkage with other sectors of the economy. According to an estimate total direct employment in the tourism sector is around 20 million. Travel and tourism industry in India is marked by considerable government presence. Each state has a tourism corporation, which runs a chain of hotels/ rest houses and operates package tours, while the central government runs the

India Tourism Development Corporation. *The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019* ranked India 34th out of 140 countries overall

India is ranked 68 th among the world's 139 most attractive destinations and scores very high on natural resources (ranked 8 th) and cultural resources (24th); with 30 world heritage sites and strong creative industries in the country. India's air transport network is ranked 39 th , the ground transport infrastructure however remains underdeveloped (ranked 43 rd). India is ranked first with regard to tourism air attendance. The promotional campaigns and marketing strategies to attract tourists remain average (ranked 53 rd). The World Economic Forum study states that India also benefits from excellent price competitiveness, ranked 6 th overall, with low ticket-taxes and airport charges along with low prices in the economy as a whole. These rankings are based on the Travel & Tourism Competitive Index (TTCI) 2011, which measures the different regulatory and business related issues. Moreover, India has been ranked the "best country brand for value for money" in the Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy in the year 2011. India also claimed the second place in CBI's „best country brand for history“, as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity of art and culture and the fourth best new country for business. India made it to the list of „rising stars“ or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China and Vietnam.

MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN INDIA

India abounds in tourism potential in throughout the country. It consists of hills, forests, mountains, rivers and seas. For the tourists, India has two special attractions like wildlife and a wealth of ancient monuments. It remains and relics of the prehistorically civilatin, the temples, sculptures and holy sites associated with Buddha, the Hindu temples and caves at Ellora, Elephanta, Khajuraho, Khandagiri, Udagiri and Tanjore. The monuments, palaces and forts of Muslim rule – the exquisite Tajmahal- and the remains of European rule like the Portuguese forts and churches at Goa, Diu and Bandel and the British forts and residencies at Chennai, Surat and Lucknow and the beauty spots on the Himalayas are all tourist attractions

India is located in the southern part of Asia. The southern part of the country is a peninsula. India is a land of diversities. It has a variety of physical features. The country is broadly divided into five physical divisions. They are the Himalayan mountain ranges, Indo-Gangetic plain and the Brahmaputra Valley, plateaus of the South-Central India and the Deccan plateau, Great

Indian Desert and the Coastal plains. Indian tourism authorities should organize package and circuit tourism in a big way for attracting tourist to Indian islands. This will provide employment of the locals, improving their economy and the nation of much needed foreign exchange. The tourism authorities should attend to the water and electricity needs of the islands besides caring for proper ecology of the small and isolated and islands as the tourists affect that. Over the zealous tourists remove life forms from the reef for souvenir (shells, shell jewellery and ornaments).

HISTORY OF TOURISM IN INDIA

Tourism in India dates back to the ancient times, and travel in the sub-continent for the purpose of learning, pilgrimage and trade had become an integral part of social life. The urge to travel within the country was fostered by the institution of pilgrimage (tirthatan). Trade, commerce and desire for culture contacts led to journeys and voyages abroad. Travel was recognised as a factor of culture enrichment. Scholars in their quest for knowledge, missionaries in their zeal for the propagation of their philosophy, and pilgrims in the cause of their faith continued to travel from and to India braving all dangers and difficulties in spirit of adventure and JOy. An intense passion for the motherland expresses itself throughout Sanskrit literature. The Atharva Veda, for example, "sings praises of the mother country as the land of the brave and the pious, of commerce and trade, of science and art, of sacrificial rites and sacred pleasures, and virtue and greatness"². This intense felling and expression of love for motherland spread over the whole continent and gave rise to network of shrives and sacred places makes institution of tirthanthan which constitutes one of the distinguishing cities and places associated with sages, saints, founders of religions and cults, assumed sanctity. Varanasi and the snow-clad Himalayas in the north and Kanchipuram in the distant south, J agannath Puri on the east coast and Dwarika in the West, with innumerable places interspersed throughout the country, came to be loved and visited because of their renic charms, temple cities rich in art, architecture and association of pious man and scholars.

Apart from the normal journeys which pilgrims performed regularly from different parts of India to various tirthas, or centers of pilgrimage, fairs such as "the Kumbha Mela - perhaps the largest religions congregation in the world - attracted thousands of persons from all walks of life. Rooted in the hoary past, the Kumbha Mela was conceived and organized as a socio-spiritual parliament",³and it held every three years on the immense expanses along the holy

waters of the Triveni (Confluence of the rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati) at Allahabad, of the river Ganga in Haridwar, the Kashipura in Ujjain and the Godavari in Nasik. One of the earliest accounts of the Kumbha at Prayag has been recorded by the Chinese Traveller Hsueh Triang who visited India (624-645 A.D.) in the early seventh century. In course of time a large number of centers of pilgrimage associated with Buddhism, Jainism and other religions and sets developed all over the country. Tirthatan, visit to a holy place for religious purposes, constituted the major segment of domestic tourism in India even today. Tourism in India was not limited within the geography of India. It also expanded beyond the seas to countries in the west to Greater India in the far east. Discoveries at Mohenjodaro and other valley sites have shown that there was intercourse between the region and western Asia before Christ. Contacts between India and the countries of central Asia, China and Tibet were also very intimate and the impress of Indian culture is easily discovered in their arts, philosophy and literature. Emperor Ashoka after the battle of Kalinga turned a Buddhist and undertook missionary activities for spreading the message of peace and Buddhism, which became a major motivational force for development for tourism. A few centuries later, the Gupta Kings made lasting contributions to tourism in India from 335 to 445 A.D. Many frescoes depicting human life style of that period were painted in the Ajanta caves. The earliest structure of the Buddhist University at Nalanda were also constructed at this time. Development of traditional industries and trade created another stream of travelers in India - several trading routes were established and traders started frequenting the centers of trade from distant places. The Ancient rulers gave due recognition to these travelers and created many wayside facilities like inns, sarais and dharamshalas for their benefit. These formed the tourism infrastructure of India in those days, and experienced massive movement of tourists throughout the subcontinent. Pleasure tourism was introduced during the Mughal rule. Mughal kings built luxurious places and enchanting gardens at places of natural and scenic beauty. During their rule, mass movements took place from one place to another on regular basis, particularly when they shifted the capital for an identified period in a year. Creation of Master piece Taj Mahal is today honour not in India, but abroad also is a symbol of India. After the Mughals, Britishers gave the new thrust and direction to the tourism in India. The establishment of railways and export/import houses at poor towns introduced qualitative and quantitative changes in the India business tourism. In addition, construction of circuit houses, inspection bungalows, dak bungalows and forest lodges/rest houses provided adequate infrastructural facilities for luxury and wildlife tourism which is also known as eco-tourism. At this time many hill stations in the Himalayas and other hill areas were developed.

SIGNIFICANCE AND GROWTH OF TOURISM IN INDIA

India is one of the fastest growing tourism countries in the world. 6.1 percent to the gross national product (GNP), providing employment to over 27 million people directly and indirectly representing 5.7 percent of the total employment in the country. Tourism industry has grown substantially in the last three decades in India. The central and state governments are aiming at positioning tourism as a major engine of economic growth and harnessing its direct and multiplier effects for employment and poverty eradications in an environmentally sustainable manner. The plan schemes of the government essentially relate to infrastructure development, product development, human resources development, promotion and marketing, information technology, research, monitoring and evaluation.

Tourism mainly integrates the people of different countries and it helps to understand the cultural, social and economic aspects between countries and the people. Education and training are vital for enhancing the links between tourism and employment generation

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA

India's performance in tourism sector has been quite impressive. During the period 2002 to 2009, the country witnessed an increase in foreign tourist arrivals from 2.38 million to 5.11 million. Due to global slowdown, terrorist activities, H1N1 influenza pandemic, etc, growth rate in foreign tourist arrivals during 2009 fell by 3.3 percent. The year witnessed a contraction in global tourism by 4.3 percent. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism increased from ` 150.64 billion in 2002 to ` 549.60 billion in 2009. The growth rate in earning in 2009 vis-a-vis 2008 was 8.3 percent. The Travel and Tourism industry in India accounted for approximately 6 percent of GDP and 30.5 million jobs (including direct and indirect) in 2008. The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 brought out by World Economic Forum, ranks India as 11th in the Asia-Pacific region and 62nd overall in a list of 133 assessed countries in 2009, up three places since 2008. In terms of travel, India stands 9th in the index of relative cost of access (ticket taxes and airport charges) to international air transport services, having almost the lowest costs in the world.

DOMESTIC TOURIST ARRIVALS IN INDIA

Since 1995, India's share of the world market has remained virtually stagnant at 0.38 percent, while domestic tourism has grown at a phenomenal rate and India now accounts for 4.6 percent share of domestic tourism worldwide. In terms of tourism receipts, India has shown relative buoyancy because of the interest shown by visitors in traditional handicrafts items and particularly in diamonds. The tenth plan visualize a mutually supportive role for tourism and handicrafts by encouraging.