

BA (P) GEOGRAPHY DISCIPLINE

SEMESTER VI

GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM

Unit 5: Tourism in India: Tourism Infrastructure; **Case Studies of Himalaya, Desert and Coastal** and Heritage; National Tourism Policy

Introduction

Thar Desert in Rajasthan is the most densely populated desert of the world. It is marked by the colorful attires, spirited men and women and above all its natural beauty of hills, sand dunes, and historical monuments. 'Nature has been partial to this state by providing it a thing of beauty which is a joy forever'.

There is a popular myth regarding the origin of Rajasthan desert, as the mythology goes, once Lord Rama, drew an arrow to destroy Lanka but when gods pleaded with the Lord to desist from his intended purpose, he pointed the arrow to a distant sea and let it escape. The intense heat generated by the arrow dried the sea and it was replaced by a dry, arid and hot desert. The myth and the reality coalesce, as the fossils derived from the Thar Desert reveal the remains of marine life. However, there are no paleobotanical evidences of the circumstances that had led to the formation of the desert.

Tourist Destination Map of Rajasthan



Tourist Arrivals in Rajasthan

In the year 2005, 11.31 lakh foreign tourists and 187.87 lakh domestic tourists came to Rajasthan. This year registered an increase of 16 % in the foreign tourist arrival in comparison to the tourist arrival in 2004. Table 3.1 gives a clear picture of the tourists arriving in Rajasthan, since 1971.

Every destination in the state is an attraction for the tourists; still, there are certain destinations that become more famous than the others. Although domestic tourists greatly outnumber the foreign tourists, the study deals with the foreign tourist arrivals also. Table 3.1 shows the trend of the tourist arrivals in Rajasthan.

There has been a gradual growth at an average rate of 7.9% in the domestic tourist arrivals in Rajasthan since 1971 (table 3.1). At the same time the foreign tourist arrivals also recorded an average growth of 11.6% from 1971 to 2005.

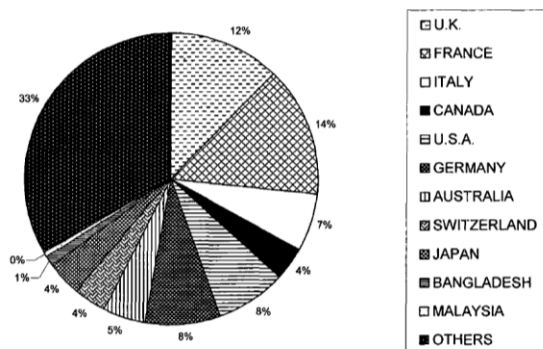
TOURIST ARRIVAL IN RAJASTHAN (1971 TO 2005)

YEAR	DOMESTIC TOURISTS (in Lakhs)	FOREIGN TOURISTS (in Lakhs)	TOTAL	YEAR	DOMESTIC TOURISTS (in Lakhs)	FOREIGN TOURISTS (in Lakhs)	TOTAL
1971	8.8	0.4	9.2	1989	38.3	4.2	42.5
1972	9.0	0.4	9.5	1990	37.3	4.1	41.5
1973	11.5	0.5	12.1	1991	43.0	4.9	47.9
1974	10	0.5	10.5	1992	53.0	5.4	58.4
1975	11.2	0.6	11.8	1993	54.5	5.4	59.9
1976	13.0	0.9	13.9	1994	47.0	4.3	51.3
1977	16.2	1.2	17.4	1995	52.5	5.3	57.8
1978	20.4	1.6	22.0	1996	57.3	5.6	62.9
1979	23.1	1.9	25.0	1997	63.0	6.0	69.0
1980	24.5	2.0	26.5	1998	64.0	6.0	70.0
1981	26.0	2.2	28.2	1999	66.7	5.6	72.3
1982	28	2.3	30.1	2000	73.7	6.2	79.9
1983	29.3	2.6	31.9	2001	77.5	6.1	83.6
1984	30.4	2.5	32.9	2002	83.0	4.2	87.2
1985	31.2	2.6	33.8	2003	125.4	6.3	131.7
1986	32.1	2.9	35.0	2004	160.3	9.7	170.0
1987	34.2	3.4	37.7	2005	187.8	11.3	199.1
1988	35	3.6	38.6				

Source: Department Of Tourism, Rajasthan

There has been a visible seasonality in tourist arrival making this industry totally seasonal in nature. As described in the last chapter, maximum tourist arrivals take place in the months of October to March. The months of April to Aug were considered to be off season for tourist industry. But since last fourfive years there has been a gradual decline in the so called off season and now a days this season is called the lean season.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS IN RAJASTHAN FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES (1997-2005)



of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan

During the last nine years maximum foreign tourists have come from France (14%) followed by UK (12%), USA and Germany (8%) and Italy (7%). Thus

the policies of the government should be to focus on the marketing in these regions or positioning its targets which produce maximum visitors for the state. However, the increase in the number of travelers to some extent can also be attributed to an increase in advertising, as tourism marketers try to enlarge their share of the global tourism pie by promoting their destinations to specific target markets.

JAISALMER

Geographical Features of Jaisalmer

The town stands on a ridge of yellowish sandstone, crowned by a fort, which contains the palace and several ornate Jain temples. Many of the houses and temples are finely sculptured. It lies in the heart of the Thar Desert and has a population of about 78,000. It is the administrative headquarters of Jaisalmer District. Jaisalmer is named after its founder Rawal Jaisal. "Jaiaslmer" means "Hill of Jaisal".



Demography

Earlier the main part of the population, lead a wandering life, grazing their flocks and herds. Large herds of camels, cattle, sheep and goats are kept. The principal trade was in wool, ghee, camels, cattle and sheep. Still the large proportion of population is located in remotely isolated places locally referred to as Dhanis, which are often devoid of basic support facilities like drinking water, transport, primary health and education services, etc. While Jaisalmer may always have been remote, it is filled with many artistic structures and monuments of local historical importance. Jaisalmer's medieval mud fortress and walled township make it a popular tourist destination. The surrounding desolate landscape evidences a stark, austere beauty. Camel safaris through the nearby desert dunes are popular with tourists.

Economy

Tourism is a major industry in Jaisalmer. Agriculture operations are carried out in three months and are critically dependent on monsoons. Thus both the factors governing economy i.e. tourism and agriculture are seasonal in nature. The Government of India initiated departmental exploration for oil in 1955-56 in the Jaisalmer area Oil India Limited discovered natural gas in 1988 in the Jaisalmer basin.

The chief imports are grain, sugar, foreign cloth, piece-goods. It suffered from famine in 1897, 1900 and other years, to such an extent that it has had to incur a heavy debt for extraordinary expenditure. The previous years from 2000 to 2004 have been greatly affected by drought. But due to tourism, which brings an additional income and job opportunities to the area the situation remained under control.

Types of Tourism Offered

Jaisalmer is the traditional city of India. People come here to feel the vastness of the sea of sand, to imbibe the glorious past and to live the life this unique culture offers. This destination offers everything any tourist can desire for. All the three destinations selected for the study i.e. Jaisalmer, Jodhpur & Bikaner offer mainly four types of tourism,

a) Adventure, b) Religious, c) Heritage and d) Cultural

The details of these types of tourism and the various tourist sites available are in the appendix I and II respectively.

The arts and crafts of the land

The local tradition of carving is best seen in little wooden boxes that are intricately pierced in exciting patterns and motifs. The famous leather work in form of juttis, the embroidered footwear the people wear, or the saddles, bags and pouches are important work of art. Also woollen and cotton rugs and blankets in which camel hair is used for weaving, silver jewellery and trinkets, mirror worked skirts, jackets and other fabrics. All these qualities make Jaisalmer a paradise for the tourists.

Tourist Arrivals in Jaisalmer

Jaisalmer has shown a continuous increasing trend in hosting the visitors. Since the year 1985 the number of domestic arrivals have increased from 73,755 to 1,77,238 domestic tourists in 2005 registering an increase of 140%.

The growth has been phenomenal, but the rate of growth has been varying. The table, shows a normal increase in the tourist arrivals at an average rate of 11.26 for the years 1985 to 1993. However the growth has not registered a positive trend throughout. In 1991 the tourists registered an increase of 50% whereas, in 1992 this growth got reduced to just 10%.

Year	Domestic Tourists	Growth Rate	Foreign Tourists	Growth Rate
1985	73755		15049	
1986	78605	6.17	21560	30.20
1987	78860	0.32	24498	11.99
1988	82530	4.45	28707	14.66
1989	92946	11.21	36825	22.04
1990	99547	6.63	40170	8.33
1991	201739	50.66	42888	6.34
1992	225797	10.65	49624	13.57
1993	254490	11.27	44736	-10.93
1994	76029	-234.73	42672	-4.84
1995	85831	11.42	48001	11.10
1996	84397	-1.70	52984	9.40
1997	69184	-21.99	57166	7.32
1998	52889	-30.81	52299	-9.31
1999	35157	-50.44	50283	-4.01
2000	3878	-498.11	50732	0.89
2001	103319	94.31	46914	-8.14
2002	96642	-6.91	25862	-81.40
2003	132881	27.27	50768	49.06
2004	182292	27.11	81208	37.48
2005	177238	-2.85	99439	18.33

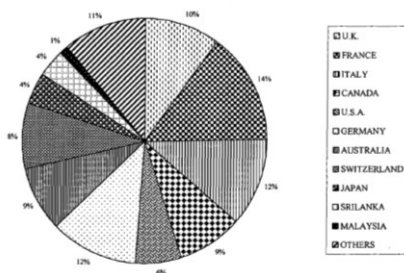
Source: Pragati Prativadan, Govt of Rajasthan , various Issues

The growth performance of the '80s was bedeviled by the emergence of unsustainable fiscal deficits and increasing strains in the external accounts, which triggered the crisis of 1991

. This was largely due to severe economic crisis in the state due to the Gulf war. It was the year 1994 that showed a startling change in tendency and an extreme reduction in number of domestic arrivals. It reduced from 2, 54,490 arrivals in 1993 to a meager 76,029 in 1994.

This trend is very clearly shown in figure 3.9, where a steep fall in the tourist arrivals is seen during the time period of 1993-1994.

FOREIGN TOURIST ARRIVALS AT JAISALMER DESTINATION (1997-2005)



Major volume of the foreign tourists i.e. 46% comes to Jaisalmer from the European countries. This is followed by North America (15 %) and then UK (10%). Australia also constitutes about 9% of the total foreign tourists visiting Jaisalmer. The pie diagram shows the constitution of the tourists from various countries as the percentage of total foreign visitors in Jaisalmer, during the years 1997-2005

Among the European nations, there are a few countries which show their preference towards Jaisalmer. Fourteen percent of the total tourists visiting Jaisalmer are from France, twelve percent are from Italy as well as from Germany, ten percent from UK and eight percent are from Switzerland. 'The main reason for the maximum tourists coming from European nations is the increase in the number of paid holidays as well as the spending income'