

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

Tourism Infrastructure demands for goods and services, and the establishments which provide such services are considered as part of the tourism industry. Further, the Tourism Infrastructure also includes establishments whose products are mainly sold to visitors, though they do not form a major share of tourist consumption. Several infrastructure sectors like power, telecommunication, water supply, roads and some production sectors like travel items, sports equipment, photographic materials, medicines and cosmetics are included in this category along with Tourism Infrastructure. The infrastructure for tourism thus includes basic infrastructure components like airports, railways, roads, waterways, electricity, water supply, drainage, sewerage, solid waste disposal systems and services. Moreover, facilities like accommodation, restaurants, recreational facilities and shopping facilities also comes under the ambit of Tourism Infrastructure. Planning for sustainable development of Tourism Infrastructure, therefore, involves the integrated development of basic infrastructure and amenities along with all the tourism facilities in a balanced manner. The basic requirements for the development of Tourism Infrastructure are: Accommodation - Forest lodges, tented accommodation, tourist complexes / tourist lodges, wayside amenities, restaurants, tourist reception centers, pilgrim sheds / dormitories, etc. at pilgrimage centers. Tourist transport - Mini-buses, jeeps, etc. for wild life viewing, cruise boats, ferry launchers, etc. for water transport, tourist coaches in selected circuits, special tourist trains. Infrastructure plays an

important role in the economic upliftment of the people. It has strong backward and forward linkages and thus acts as a major driver of growth across the economy. The creation of road networks, electricity generation and distribution networks, creation of telecommunication facilities, construction activities, banking and financing, etc. in the first instance leads to the generation of livelihood opportunities to the vast skilled as well as unskilled labour force. Once this process is over, it leads to the higher connectivity and facilitates the integration of hitherto unconnected economic systems into the mainstream economy.

Meaning of Tourism Infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure can be regarded as the physical elements that are designed and erected to cater for visitors. The strong relationship between tourism development and infrastructure has been theoretically established by a number of authors.

Difference between tourism infrastructure and suprastructure

Some authors point to the difference between tourism infrastructure and suprastructure, claiming that suprastructure depends on infrastructure. Tourism infrastructure includes ancillary and complementary facilities, equipment, systems, processes, and resources necessary for the functioning of every tourist destination. This primarily includes roads, railways, airports, and the like, which make a tourist destination accessible for tourists. In addition, infrastructure includes health care systems, services, and public services. Building on infrastructure, suprastructure includes building facilities, which exist only because of tourism activities. Their main purpose is accommodation and meeting the needs and desires of tourists, in the form of hotels, campsites, restaurants, sports facilities, and the like (Popesku, 2011).

Importance

Tourism infrastructure is the basis of tourism development, as well as a base for utilization of destination resources. The importance of tourism infrastructure is reflected in the fact that it can contribute to increasing the efficiency of production and distribution of tourism services, and, in some cases, such as remote destinations, even increase the supply of tourism services. For tourists to be able to reach some tourist destinations, there should be the developed transport infrastructure, which is a precondition for consuming other tourism services of the destination itself. The arrival of tourists enhances the efficiency of human resources at the destination, as tourists require certain services in order to feel better during their stay at the selected tourist destination. In particular, there is an increase in the demand for infrastructure services in terms of water supply, waste disposal, communication and electricity supply, as the necessary elements for comfortable functioning of tourists at the selected destination. Infrastructure is defined as the provision of public safety, transportation services, medical systems, financial systems, education systems, and other services involved in the population's, as well as in tourists' demand (Ritchie, Crouch 2005). As a component of the regional tourism product, tourism infrastructure is of special importance for long-term tourism growth and the general progress of tourist destinations in providing the required services to tourists

Types of Tourism Infrastructure

Literature provides different views on the number and type of components representing tourism infrastructure. Thus, according to the Tourism & Transport Forum (Tourism & Transport Forum, 2012), tourism infrastructure is the supply chain of transport, social and environmental infrastructure collaborating at a regional level to create an attractive tourism destination.

Transport infrastructure in this chain provides destination access to tourists from the international and domestic markets, and includes roads, airports, and railways. *Social infrastructure* relates to accommodation facilities in the form of rooms to accommodate tourists and other supporting physical structures for various kinds of activities and services that attract tourists. This infrastructure includes hotels, convention centers, stadiums, galleries, and other necessary facilities. *Environmental infrastructure* is a natural value, and refers to national parks, marine parks, and reserves which visitors can tour (Figure 1). In addition to these three types of infrastructure, tourism infrastructure includes the shared infrastructure, made of a network of regional, state, and national tourism organizations on the market where there is a tourist destination, and is engaged in the distribution of tourism products (Tourism & Transport Forum, 2012).

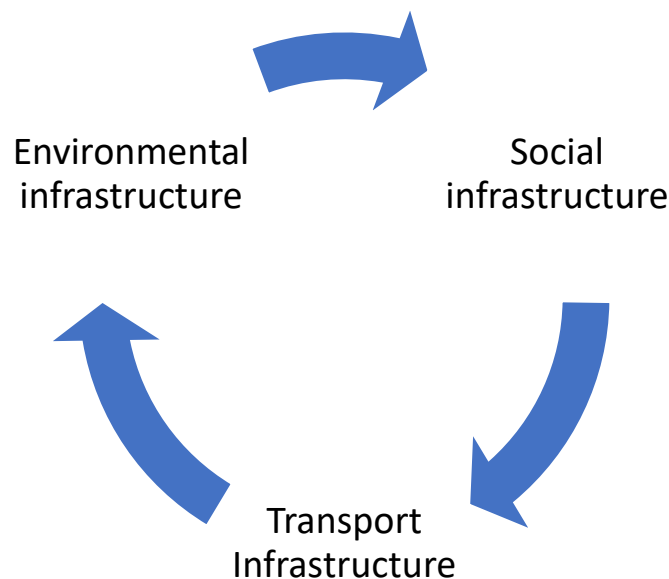


Figure 1 - Types of tourism infrastructure

Source: Tourism & Transport Forum (TTF), (2012) Tourism Infrastructure Policy and Priorities