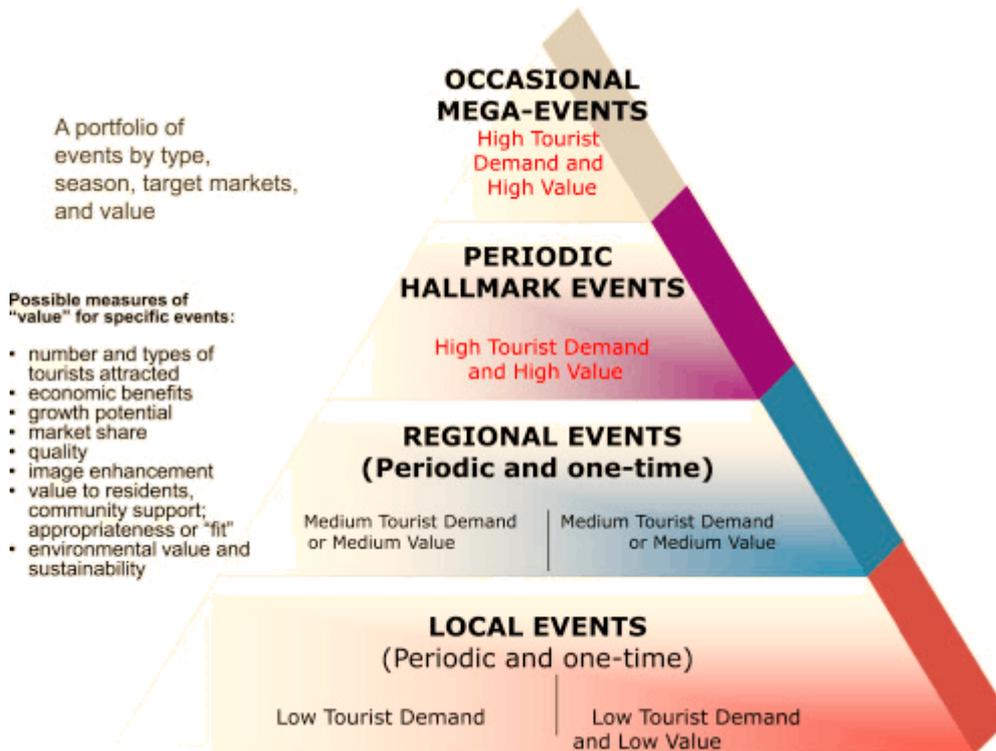




Prospects and Problems of Tourism Objectives, Profile of Tourism in India, Tourism Then and Now Part 1



Result for Prospects and Problems of Tourism Objectives

We know that the capacity of tourists from rich countries to spare their leisure time and money for holidaying combined with their business enterprise has led to steady growth of tourism industry. A part of the foreign exchange we earn from international tourists in addition to what our domestic sightseers contribute during their travel and stay is further spent to improve tourism infrastructure.

In turn, it adds to the number of incoming tourists, generates more employment, foreign exchange brings people closer together and has a great impact upon area development within the country. The prospering tourism sustains the revival of traditional skills, local arts, craft work, activities of the performing folk artists. As a result of greater marketability of the visible and invisible or intangible products, the reconstruction of regional as well as national economy has taken place in a big way.

In this chapter, we will learn in some detail the present and future prospects of tourist activities building up a travel and tourism industry and giving rise to a number of new professions for the people. But the massive number of tourists visiting only a few popular places, has gone beyond their carrying capacity. We shall therefore, take up the problems of mass or unplanned tourism and shall look into the possible regional as well as national policies for adopting measures to tackle them.

Objectives

The major objectives of this chapter are:

- To assess the existing position of the growth of India's tourism as a prelude to its further promotional programmes
- To explain tourism playing its role as a service industry for the development of an area
- To analyse the impact of growth of tourism on employment and income generation through the promotion of its invisible exports, marketing of local handicrafts, and activities of performing folk artists
- To discern the danger signals (i.e. negative impact) posed by hordes of incoming tourists
- To evaluate the national and regional policies suggesting measures for promotion of healthy people and area friendly tourism

Profile of Tourism in India

It becomes convenient to understand the prospects of India's tourism after explaining the existing position of its growth in comparison with other countries. Since 1970s during the current period of its development, South Asia, to which our country belongs has not done that well to keep up its share in the tourist market of the world.

Though our travel and tourism industry has been prospering and the number of tourist arrivals has reached 3.36 million in 2004, even Hong Kong and Singapore, much smaller in area, are ahead of us. Every tenth human being is a traveller in the present-day world. With globalisation, the number of travellers has risen to 800 million in the beginning of this century. Yet our country is positioned poorly with its less than half percent tourist arrivals in respect of the global numbers.

At our own level, from mere 17000 foreign tourists in 1951 to over 3 million in 2004, it is a massive increase. Tourism is a key economic activity and is expected to contribute 5.3 % to India's total GDP. India is now ranked as 5th top tourist destination- once occupying 35th position in the world. Tourist arrivals are expected to be 4.55 million in 2007 by further improving our infrastructure. Our annual growth in this respect will be 13.7% in 2003-07 as compared to the current 7.8% in 2002-04. In contrast, our relative share of employment in travel and tourism is at present lower both in south-east Asia and the world. While world's share of this employment is 7.8% that of India is just 2.6%.

Yet the tourists have not been staying for more than 6 days in Singapore because of its having only 1000 sq.km area and higher cost of living in our comparison. The longer stay in India may be due to its large size, and an inexpensive standard of living.

Within the country itself, 2.3 million of domestic tourists (inclusive of 1.5 million pilgrims) in 1996, have increased to 3.5 million in the registered category (inclusive of about 1.9 million pilgrims) in 2004. No true estimate of our pilgrim tourists could be made so far. But a rise of

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23.5% both in foreign and domestic tourist arrivals has been noticed in the year 2004 as compared to the previous year.

It must be noted that international tourism is highly susceptible to any crisis in the country. It results in an immediate sharp decline in tourist arrivals. But pilgrim tourism is seldom the first casualty. The devotees follow their fixed schedule irrespective of any risks on the way. That is why, Rs. 200/- crores, 43% more than in the previous year, have been separately provided for the upkeep of domestic tourist destinations.

Foreign Exchange Earning

We earn a good chunk of our foreign exchange from what the incoming tourists from European countries spend in India. They form about 50% of all tourist arrivals.

In practical terms, India's total foreign exchange earning in US dollars did rise was 4.122 billion dollars in 2004. It is an increase of 1.36 billion dollars in the last decade. In proportion to further increase in world's foreign exchange earnings from tourism over the year, the percentage share of our country remains at almost the same position in 2004 as it was about ten year earlier.

Tourism then and Now

For the first time, tourism was mentioned in India's Second Five-Year Plan in early sixties. Government of India took up a scheme for development of facilities at places frequently visited by foreign tourists. The state governments were asked to attend to the needs of middle- and low-income domestic tourists at places frequently visited by them. In early eighties of the last century, it was felt to correctly estimate the future needs of tourist accommodation and also to protect the environment in view of the increase in the number of visitors.

It was in 1985-90 plan period when the status of an industry was accorded to tourism by a number of states. The scope for the sale of handicrafts by opening new forms of tourism and to organise circuit tour suiting specific areas, was considered important. From this plan period onwards, the emphasis has been on

1. Generation of employment through its activities.
2. Inviting private and possibly foreign capital for its development.
3. Preparation of 15-20 year plan by the states for developing various segments of its infrastructure.
4. Enhancing the co-ordination between related government departments and other agencies for its promotion.

In the ninth plan period, the promotion of domestic tourism in support of international tourism was considered important. A list of 21 pilgrim towns all over the country has been drawn to provide facilities for the largest number of our low-budget people gathering there from different parts of the country. Now the budget allocation for tourism has increased from Rs. 364.61 crores in 1990-95 period to almost its double at Rs. 786/- crores in the years 2005-06.

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Private funding of the schemes will be tapped in addition to it. The following break up of central government budget allocation for tourism in order to understand the current phase of its development:

	Provision of
(i) Improvement of India's tourism infrastructure.	Rs 350/- crores
(ii) Promotion of overseas tourism for publicising our tourist attractions through advertisements under the theme called "Incredible India".	Rs. 140/- crores
(iii) Promotion of domestic tourism under the publicity tag called "Atithi Devo Bhava".	Rs. 70/- crores
(iv) Improvement of tourist service like taxies, coaches, guides, tour operator, drivers, and other human resource development.	Rs. 226/- crores
	Total: Rs. 786/- crores

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ALLOCATION FOR TOURISM

The need for the above budgeting is self-explanatory.