

Tourism in Rajasthan: Problems and Prospects

Abstract

Rajasthan, an exotic land of splendid beauty and valour, is one of the most important tourist destinations in India and south-east Asia. A land endowed with invincible forts, magnificent palaces, unending hilly ranges and waves of sand dunes and serene lakes. The tourists of different destinations are fascinated to this magnificent land for various attractions. Traditional art, handicraft, historical heritages, forts, palaces, monuments, religious places, natural scenes, flora-fauna, sports, fairs, festivals, culture and cuisines etc. are the major attractions in the State. The potential of tourism in Rajasthan have not been fully harnessed. In order to draw tourists in Rajasthan, there is a need to study the problems and prospects of tourism in Rajasthan. This article covers all the major problems and prospects relating to tourism industry in Rajasthan.

Keywords: Tourism, Rajasthan, Problems, Prospects Etc.

Introduction

Conceptual Diagnosis

During the last decade tremendous changes have taken place in the tourism sector. Rules and regulations have been relaxed to present country as an interesting tourism place. New schemes were launched. Number of tourists increased and tourism sector emerged as an important income generating sector in the economy. Tourism is a source of foreign exchange earnings and employment. Tourism is a fastest growing industry in the entire world, so is the case with India. With the development of information and communication technology (ICT) the distances in the world have been declined tremendously, therefore the present world is known as 'Global Village' The new phenomena have given boost to the development of tourism across the globe

Tourism industry in Rajasthan is a very important economic activity, which has direct and indirect impact on economic, social and cultural life of the people. This industry has many benefits to the state in terms of foreign exchange earnings, employment generation, increase standard of living, regional development, promotion in international understanding, conservation of local arts and crafts etc.

The State Government has already realized the potential of this industry for the economic development in the state and has adopted various measures to promote tourism in the state. The popular slogan "*Padharo Mhare Desh*", means Rajasthan invites and welcomes the tourists.

The Government of Rajasthan and private sector both are engaged in the development of the tourism industry. The Department of Tourism in Rajasthan mainly relates to exploring new places, planning and development of new areas, advertisement and motivational activities to enhance tourism industry; similarly private sector generates employment by investment in already developed and new potential areas. All these activities increase income level of the society and help in economic growth and development. But it has been observed that potentials of tourism industry in Rajasthan have not been fully utilized as it was expected to be. Before discussing the problems it would be worth to glimpse at the growth of tourism in Rajasthan.

Growth of Tourism in Rajasthan

Over the last two decades, Rajasthan has emerged as one of the leading state in India and the state was the third preference of tourists after Goa and Kerala as travelled destination in India. In 2015, there was an increase of 4.39 percent in foreign tourists arrivals in India; during the period of 2010 to 2015, nearly 18 to 22 percent of the foreign tourists who came to India visited Rajasthan also.

Statistical data regarding tourism in Rajasthan for the period of 2010 to 2016 are as follows:

Manisha Sharma

Lecturer,

Deptt.of Business Administration,
Government Girls P.G. College,
Sawai Madhopur, Rajasthan

Year	No. of Tourists			Percent change over previous Year		
	Domestic	Foreign	Total	Domestic	Foreign	Total
2010	25543877	1278523	26822400	- 0.06	19.11	0.71
2011	27137323	1351974	28489297	6.24	5.74	6.21
2012	28611831	1451370	30063201	5.43	7.35	5.52
2013	30298150	1437162	31735312	5.89	-0.98	5.56
2014	33076491	1525574	34602065	9.17	6.15	9.03
2015	35187573	1475311	36662884	6.38	-3.29	5.96
2016	41495115	1513729	43008844	17.92	2.60	17.30

The analysis of the above table reveals that:

1. There is an increasing trend in the domestic tourists arrivals in Rajasthan whereas a mix trend in the foreign tourists arrivals.
2. In 2015, there was a decrease of 3.29% in foreign tourists arrivals in Rajasthan whereas there was an increase of 6.38% in domestic tourists arrivals as compared to 2014.
3. In 2016, there was an increase of 17.92% in domestic tourists arrivals and 2.60% in foreign tourists arrivals in Rajasthan as compared to 2015.
4. In the year 2010, 12.78 lacs foreign tourists visited Rajasthan, while in 2016 this figure was 15.13 lacs. The cumulative growth rate was 18.38% during this period.
5. In 2010, 2.55 crore domestic tourists visited Rajasthan whereas in 2016 domestic tourists arrivals were 4.14 crore. The cumulative growth rate was 62.35% during this period.

Rajasthan is a natural choice for international and domestic tourists. The rate of growth of domestic tourism is expected to be 7% while that of foreign tourist, it is likely to be 5% as per the studies conducted by "TCS Projections" up to year 2020.

At present, in the state economy- industry sector contributes 32.5% agriculture sector 22.5%. Service sector 45% while tourism contributes 15%.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To identify the hurdles and problem in the development of tourism in Rajasthan.
2. To suggest the measures to overcome the problems and hurdles in the way of proper development of tourism in Rajasthan and to suggest further measures for development.
3. To evaluate the role of government agencies in the development of tourism in Rajasthan.

Review of Literature

Sufficient literature is available on tourism industry of India and Rajasthan. Different Government agencies operating in the field of tourism publish different types of literature including the periodicals and annual reports. Some micro research work has also been done by researchers in Rajasthan. Though the above cited works are very useful and informative and highlighted many burning problems of tourism and suggested appropriate measures to overcome but these works have become very old and did not remain much useful in present context, therefore a study is required to analyze the present problems and suggest policy prescriptions for the future growth of tourism in Rajasthan.

Hypothesis of the Study

The present study is being undertaken to trace the following hypothesis:

1. Tourism potential have not been fully utilized in the state of Rajasthan.
2. State government and government agencies have not played effective role in exploiting the tourism potentials of the State.

Research Methodology and Design

Researcher has used primary as well as secondary data for arriving at some interferences. The primary data have been collected through field survey based on questionnaire technique; moreover observations technique has also been adopted to make a spot study. In addition to these, the researcher has also conducted personal interviews of some of the tourists, hoteliers transport and tour operators, Government officials and others engaged in the sphere of tourism in the State. The research has also visited the important spot of tourism for an in-depth knowledge of various issues pertaining to tourism.

The main sources of secondary data are the published literature of the different government and semi-government agencies and in-depth published research works in the field of tourism.

Problems

After observing, analyzing and interpretation of data with the help of various statistical tools, for the purpose of drawing inferences, it has been concluded that in spite of massive efforts by Governments for the development of tourism in Rajasthan, the results are not so enthusiastic, some of the major problems are as follows:

Poor Conveyance System

Poor conveyance system is a crucial problem in the development of tourism in Rajasthan. Though, the famous tourists destinations are having well connectivity, but there are so many spots of touristic importance where adequate and proper conveyance facilities are not available. Most of them are unidentified due to this reason. Besides, in urban and semi urban areas the traffic system is not proper or even in miserable condition. Most of the roads are not well maintained.

Inadequate Advertisement

Inadequate advertisement and weak publicity of many important tourist destinations are the major problems. Tourists are not well informed about attractions of particular destination, accommodation facilities available and other services of their interest; all these adversely affect the tourism and revenue in Rajasthan. Now State Government is serious in this regard and systematic advertisement system has been adopted.

Insufficient Accommodation

In last few years the domestic as well as foreign tourists are attracting toward Rajasthan, but the accommodation facilities are not increasing accordingly. Seasonal pressure of tourists also cause to price hike; this situation adversely affect the budget of tourists and they are forced to cut their stay in Rajasthan.

Now Government of Rajasthan has taken policy decision to promote hotel industry and many relaxation and incentives have been announced for hotel industry.

Higher Tariff Charges

As the accommodation facilities are insufficient in Rajasthan so hoteliers charge a very high tariff from the tourists. The agents also misguide tourists and sometimes they become cheaters. The hidden commission of agents also increases the tariff of hotels. All these situations are main causes of repulsion and in result, foreign tourists are moved to other countries where they find good accommodation at reasonable tariff.

Higher Tax Rates

The tax rates in Rajasthan are higher as compared to other states. As and when a tourist enters in Rajasthan he has to pay some extra amount as service charges or in some other names. At every stage- whether on airport, in restaurant, hiring cab services or at stay in hotel some taxes are there. This adversely affects to their budget and negative impact on the growth of tourism. Besides higher taxes, the service providers charge service charges for the services they have rendered to tourists. Sometimes these charges are not justified and create a conflict between tourist and service provider. Now government has passed a rule that service charges are payable at the sweet-will of the customer; service provider cannot force the customer to pay such charges.

Non Availability of Tourists Reception Centers

Whenever a tourist comes to visit Rajasthan he wants someone to guide him properly, but in place of proper guidance he is often misguided by the strangers because there is not the facility of Tourists Reception Center. Though, the Government of Rajasthan has established TRCs at the important tourist destinations, but these TRCs are facing the problems of understaffing. Sometimes the TRCs personal does not have proper information about touristic attractions.

Price Discrimination

Keeping in view the higher earnings specially from foreign tourists, the State Government charges high tariff from foreign tourists. We can see this price discrimination at many places, for instance while visiting heritages, national parks, zoo or even using camera foreign tourists are charged with higher rates. This practice should be banned because it hurts them and we should not forget that we have invited them.

Improper Safety and Security

Now a days, the world is facing the problem of terrorists attacks. India is also facing the same. Besides, many tourists have been injured at road side

by vehicles or even wounded animals. Some of them have died, these incidences also have happened in Rajasthan and not in favor of tourism. Contrary, these incidences are against the prestige of the State. Along with these issues, security issues and crime, especially against women are the other challenges that stained the reputation of Indian tourism industry in recent years. China and Japan have issued travel warning for female travelers not to travel in India, even as a group, unless it is absolutely necessary.

Non Availability of Hygienic Food

Cuisine is also an element of attraction to a tourist destination. Whenever a tourist comes to visit a particular state he wants to taste the local cuisine. In Rajasthan, food services, specially at tourists destinations are sometimes not hygienic or below standard. People dealing with tourists at food centers should be educated toward in this regard.

Non availability of continental food at tourist destination is another big problem.

Overcrowding

Tourism has become a global activity during these years. The boom in tourism industry has increased pressure on infrastructure facilities. In Rajasthan, unplanned and insufficient development has created a big problem. We see over crowd at most of the tourism destinations. This has created a number of problems such as water pollution, air pollution, air-borne diseases, pick pocketing, snatching and feelings of unsafe among them. Overcrowding also adversely affects the environment and scenic beauty.

Poor Visa Facilities

Whenever a foreign tourist plans to visit India or any state such as Rajasthan he has to apply for tourist visa.

To obtain visa is not an easy task. The tourist is supposed to go through a system of clearance and formalities. All the process is time consuming and mind taxing also. Sometimes the time taken is so lengthy that tourists have to give up the idea of visiting India. Keeping this problem in mind the Government of India has introduced e-visa policy which has brought positive change.

Irresponsible Tourists

Tourism is a pleasure activity and no doubt tourists have the right to enjoy, but many times the behavior of tourists are irresponsible. They act in such a way that their activities are against civic sense. Even in national parks they are not sincere. One can see garbage thrown by tourists which is harmful for wild animals and nature. Besides, at heritage sites they mark their presence by scratching on the walls and making diagrams without considering the valuable importance and beauty of that place. In Rajasthan, this practice can be seen at Ranthambhore National Park- the world fame park and many other places.

Insufficient Communications Facility

The present time is known as Information and Communication Technology time, but in Rajasthan ICT facilities are in poor condition. Most of the area is out of this service. The tourists, specially the foreigners find difficulty while calling to their

natives or accessing to a site. It has been found that many times they leave their tour without completing it due to poor communication facility.

Inadequate Healthcare Facilities

For the point of view of medical facilities, Rajasthan can be said backward. Medical facilities are centralized up to a few cities- namely Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur etc. Most of the area is unattained by medical cares.

Even the RTDC does not provide any medical facility. The elderly tourists or chronically ill tourists who visit certain destination in Rajasthan find themselves in tense situation due to non availability of proper medical facilities.

Booking Difficulties of Accommodation

As the internet services are poor and most of the hoteliers are not having internet facilities so it is difficult for tourists to book online accommodation. They have to depend on agents who charge higher tariff than the actual payments to hoteliers. Sometimes the charges are not justified. This difficulty and higher cost of accommodation is a major problem. Now situation is changing; RTDC as well as other private hoteliers are using internet services for bookings.

Seasonal Business

Rajasthan is a deserted land, most of the area is under desert. The hot and dry climate does not suit to tourists. They visit the land in winter season. Thus the problem of seasonal business arises. Hoteliers curtail the staff due to down season. The staff and the persons who are directly and indirectly associated with tourism industry face part time unemployment problem. They have to depend on other sources of earnings. The seasonal business cause losses to government as well as others.

Problems of the Officials of RTDC

Shortage of funds and facilities, instability of tourism policies, lack of training for human resource development, lack of co-ordination, lack of professionalism in policies formulations, shortage of professional in RTDC, poor innovativeness in marketing, Lack of personnel at TRCs and hotel units, impediment from local people, insufficient communication with travel agencies, non cooperation of travel agents and absence of performance evaluation etc. are some of the major problems associated with RTDC.

Prospects of Tourism in Rajasthan

Rajasthan is a natural choice for international and domestic tourists. The rate of growth of domestic tourism is expected to be 7% while that of foreign tourist, it is likely to be 5% as per the studies conducted by "TCS Projections" up to year 2020.

In 2016-17, 4crore 30 lacs tourists (foreign and domestic) visited Rajasthan, while in 2015-16 this figure was 3 crore 66 lacs and in 2014-15, 3 crore 46 lacs tourists visited Rajasthan. Worldwide, the capital city Jaipur ranked at 52 by the number of foreign tourist arrivals.. At present, in the state economy-industry sector contributes 32.5% agriculture sector 22.5%. Service sector 45% while tourism contributes 15%. Several industry drivers such as government initiatives, diverse product offering, growing economy,

increasing disposable income levels and marketing initiatives along with key trends such as increasing number of women and senior citizen tourists, multiple short trips and weekend holidays, innovation of innovative tourism concepts and tour packages are playing a pivotal role in shaping the Indian tourism sector. The number of tourists is increasing day by day in Rajasthan. Key attributable reason to the success of tourism in the State is the increasing investments towards the tourism sector. The Government of Rajasthan allotted Rs. 167 crore for tourism sector for the financial year 2017-18.

In the budget 2018-19, the State Government has given relaxation of 50% in stamp duty while purchasing tourism property. At Mahi Project in Banswara district, the government has announced to expend 10 crore rupees for the development of 100 *islands* and Rs.2crore in other districts for the development of historical and cultural places which are important for the point of view of tourism. Besides, Rs.33 crore 25 lacs on conservation of the 19 monuments. The State Government has allotted Rs 7 crore for the development of Mangarh Dham.

The entertainment and tourism units which were getting benefit of tax rebate under entertainment tax and luxury tax before GST, such units will get GST based benefit.

Lastly, tourism is known as the smokeless industry. Rajasthan has been endowed by nature, historical and cultural heritages, young and hardworking generation. The State Government has taken tourism sector under priority all these indicates that though there are many problems and hurdles in the development of tourism sector but the prospects are very high.

The Government of Rajasthan and RTDC have the primary responsibility for tourism development, but the RTDC himself is suffering from the problem of shortage of staff. Many RTDC units are in losses. Their working and operations are not proper. Now it is duty of the government to fulfill staff, improve infrastructure, aggressive advertisement policy, effective marketing strategy, relaxation in taxes, control over malpractices then certainly it will attract foreign as well as domestic tourist in the State and the tourism industry in Rajasthan will be greatly flourished.

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