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DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN MADHYA PRADESH

(A case of Sanchi and Bandhavgarh)

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Abstract

In modern times tourism has been measured as an epitome for filling the gap between the upper-class and the lower-class of the society. It is the only source where from the long standing demands of eliminating the poverty can be fulfilled. This is having the highest opportunity to formulate strong links between progression and rural economy. Several cities in Madhya Pradesh, the heart of incredible India are extraordinary for their architecture or scenic beauty like the Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi and the National Park of Bandhavgarh. The oldest stone structure commissioned by the emperor Ashoka the Great, links us emotionally to the 3rd century BC. While as the national park presents an opening to see wild life devotedly. Therefore the expansion of tourism should be the prime concern to any form of government, state or central. It is a necessity to make yearly tourism plans that must be implicated by the concerned departments. So far as the development of tourism is concern, it doesn't simply mean to facilitate tourists at a destination, but to make them accessible to the places where they can intermingle with people of different cultures, traditions and languages. This is an undeniable fact that transportation is the principal factor which affects tourism and should be modernized without the impairment of natural beauty. Besides, more and more information should be disseminated through electronic and print media both about these tourist destinations.

Key words: Tourism, Sanchi, Bandhavgarh, Rural development and Local culture.

Introduction

In recent years tourism has become a comprehensive leisure activity, a major source of income for many countries, and an essence for filling the gap between the aristocratic class and the working-class of the society. Above all, it provides an opportunity to originate strong links between progression and rural economy. As an activity, it can be both national and international. Depends up

on the inflow and outflow of tourism income, it has significant implications on a country's balance of payments. The word is not as simple to define as it seems, because of its various types such as nature tourism, ecotourism, rural tourism, and adventurous tourism etc. However, the most accepted definition is that offered by the World Tourism Organisation "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes." (Talwar 1)

For centuries together, tourism has been observed as a gale force that promoted social understanding within nations by sharing ideas and emotions with the people of other countries. On the other hand, it is world's biggest industry which has a direct bearing on the life of an individual. As per the statistical records, tourism provides about 10 percent of the world's income and employs almost one tenth of the world's workforce (Mirbabaye and Malika 1). It has been predicted that the percentage will increase to a great extent by 2020. So far as tourism of India is concern, it is the biggest sector that fulfils the employment demand of our nation to a great extent. Tourism as an employment generator can be understood by the following data collected from Economic Survey of India 2011-12:

In India every one million invested in tourism creates 47.5 jobs directly and around 85-90 jobs indirectly. In comparison, agriculture creates only 44.6 jobs and manufacturing a mere 12.6 jobs. Moreover tourism is the third largest foreign exchange earner after gems and jewellery and readymade garments. (Tourism Sector in India 1)

It is worth to mention here that tourism is an imperative sector of Indian economy and contributes significantly in the nation's Foreign Exchange earnings. It has also been calculated that our foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from tourism

during 2010 to 2012 was Rs.64, 889 crore, Rs.77, 591 crore and Rs.94, 487 crore respectively (Tourism Sector in India 1). Therefore, from the above numerical records it is evident that the earnings are continuously increasing and it will reach to a huge amount if government will incessantly develop this sector.

Madhya Pradesh Tourism

The role that our state Madhya Pradesh, the heart of incredible India plays in the growth of national tourism can't be neglected. The state has been home to the cultural heritage of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism. The Innumerable monuments, delicately carved temples and forests are spread all over the state. The main rivers Narmada, Tapti, Chambal, Sone, Betwa, and Mahanadi originates from the hill ranges of the Vindhyas and the Satpuras add colours to the natural beauty of the state. Whilst the wide range of forests offers a unique and thrilling panorama of wildlife as in the national parks of Bandhavgarh, Kanha, and Madhav (Shivpuri).

The specific thing about the state is that its climatic condition is moderate except summer months and has a composite population of both aristocratic class and the tribals having different beliefs and customs. The peak season for the tourism in the region is from November to February. The more specific thing is that its inhabitants have their own independent cultures. Culture is sum of natural surroundings, availability of means of subsistence, and the way of living. It is, therefore, a natural deduction that the region may possess enough potential to attract tourists (Dube 56). The state has 18 National Highways of 5,027 km and State Highways of 10,249 km. Besides, the region has around 4,948 km of railway lines passing through it and five operational airports that facilitate tourists to access major cities of Madhya Pradesh. (IL&FS 9-10)

As per the records available 2,20,88,927 domestic and 2,51,733 foreign tourists arrived in the state in year 2008. In 2009 the number increased to 2,31,06,206 and 2,00,819 tourists. Whilst in 2010 it was 3,80,79,595 and 2,50,430 tourists (IL&FS 7). This is all because of the increasing number of tourists that the state has improved its rank to 5th in terms of domestic tourist arrivals with respect to other states (Invest MP Newsline 2). On the other side, our state generates benefits equivalent to Rs 637 crore yearly and bagged the Best Tourism State Award in 2012. (ES Tourism 10).

Madhya Pradesh contains 382 tourist destinations, including World Heritage Sites. The major destinations in the State are, Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, The National Park of Bandhavgarh, The Marble Rocks at Bhedaghat, Kanha National Park, the Afghan Architecture fort of Mandu, The temples of Khajuraho and beautiful hill resort at Pachmarhi. Among these destinations the first two sites Sanchi and Bandhavgarh plays a vital role in the state tourism due to the stupas built by Emperor Ashoka centuries before and the highest density of tiger population.

Methodology

This study is based on the personal observation, interview method and focused group discussion to understand the socio-economic impact of tourism on the inhabitants at Sanchi and Bandhavgarh. In this regard 10 hoteliers, 10 shopkeepers, 11 taxi operators, and 20 local community members were contacted for this purpose. Besides, focused group discussion method was used to authenticate the data collected and to see the social impact upon the residents. The basic intention behind this research is that to know how local people are feeling and how they react to these developments, and also how they perceive about these developments.

The study also wants to know whether there is any change in the earning of local community over time.

Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi

Sanchi is the oldest stone structure in India commissioned by the emperor Ashoka the Great, in the 3rd century BC. Sanchi Stupas are situated at Sanchi Town in Raisen district, 46 km north east of Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh. It is believed that the construction work of these stupas was overseen by Ashoka's wife, Devi herself. Besides stupas, Sanchi is famous in the world for monolithic Asokan pillar, temples, monasteries and sculptural wealth. In ancient times the site was named as Kakanaya, Kakanava, Kakanadabota and Bota-Sripurvata. Nearest airport to the destination is Bhopal (46km), railway stations are Vidisha (10km), Bhopal, bus stands are Sanchi (10 km) and Bhopal. The data regarding the number of tourists who have visited to the Sanchi stupa is given in the below table:

Year	Domestic Tourists	Foreign Tourists
2007-08	98200	21474
2008-09	139978	5407
2009-10	162629	6540
2010-11	200637	6977
2011-12	203903	6962
2012-13	213026	6317

Source: Archeological Survey of India, Sanchi (November, 2013).

The analysis of the above table clearly reveals that the number of tourists has declined over time in case of foreign tourists; it was as high as 21,474 in 2007-08 but start dwindling thereafter through 2012-13 and reached to only 6,317. But in case of domestic tourists it has increased secularly, as it was 98,200 in 2007-08 which increased to 2,13,026 in 2012-13. Inadequate accommodation facility and meager transportation facilities are the two major factors responsible for the decreasing number of foreign tourist arrivals at this world famous tourist destination. While talking to the tourists they said that the train/rail facility is highly insignificant as the sanchi station is meant for only passenger/local trains and the major trains do not stop at this station which comes in the way of prospective tourists who intend to visit this destination. As a result of inadequate lodging and boarding facilities, the tourist activity here is a picnic type where tourists come for the day stay for a while and get back to other destination the nearest being Bhopal.

The National Park of Bandhavgarh

Bandhavgarh National Park is situated in Umaria district among the outlying hills of Vindhya Range and is named after the ancient Bandhavgarh fort. The National Park was established in 1968 and covers approximately an area of 484 sq. km that presents an opening to see wild life devotedly. This is mostly because of this park that the state has earned the name of tiger state of India. The common flora of the park is Aonla, Bamboo, Sal, Jamun, Garari, and Tendu, while as the fauna is Tiger, Lion, Nilgay, Tendua, Sambhar, and Wild pig. The nearest airport to the destination is Khajuraho (237 km), railway station is Umaria (35 km), and bus stand are Umaria and Katni (102 km). The census conducted in 2005 illustrated that 46 to 52 tigers were present in the park, but the latest census of 2012 shows the number was increased to 64 tigers until the death of senior most tiger, Bokha on June 01, 2012. As per the records available 64,053 domestic and 20,658 foreign tourists arrived to this destination in 2007-08 and the number increased to 76,789 and 25,419 tourists in 2008-09 (kumar Suhas 10).

What is more relevant is that the benefits of tourism activity in the said national park have confined itself to outsiders to a large extent than to the local inhabitants. As most of the resorts which have been built in the near areas including Tala, Gurwahi and Kutchwahi villages belong to non residents and the major position like managers, assistant managers etc. in these resorts are also occupied by non residents. Therefore, the benefits to local community is confined to a) Waiters and other lower level works, b) guides, c) safaris and d) porters in the bus stand and other trivial jobs. Steps should be taken to involve the local community more and more in the tourism business. This could be done by offering such courses which meet the demand of professionals as managers, trained chiefs and other trained staff.

The next important thing is that those villagers which come in the boundary of the national park must be rehabilitated without destroying their ethnic and cultural mosaic, this will enhance the tourists experience otherwise the experience will lose its importance. Gone are the days when people of different areas used to come to enjoy the big shopping malls, beaches and sand near shore. Now the time people want to learn how people in rural areas live and want to experience the same living by indulging in activities as done by the rural people of the destination. This has a worldwide acceptability, as can be seen in Cuba, Costa Rica, Brazil and other Western and European countries.

Conclusion and Suggestions

In the conclusion, it is not fallacious to say that the state has a diversity of tourist resources which could play an imperative role in the nation's Foreign Exchange Earnings. The increasing number of tourist arrival in the state will directly or indirectly generate employment opportunities to the people. Tourism straightly affects on the rural development provided state and central government will develop this sector. Government should make and implement yearly plans for the development of tourism. Development doesn't mean to facilitate tourists at a destination, but to make them accessible to the places where they can intermingle with people of different cultures, traditions and languages. The most important factor that affects tourism is transportation that should be modernized without any impairment of natural beauty. Non-stop bus services particularly for tourism should be started to connect all the major tourist destinations of the state, as in Delhi-Agra. This service will definitely increase the number of tourist arrivals in the state and ultimately increase our tourism economy. At the end, the development of tourism

at Sanchi and Bandhavgarh needs the consideration of the following points.

1. Sanchi being the best tourist destination, there is not much shopping opportunity for tourists that will increase regional income.
2. As such there is no lodging and boarding facility available at Sanchi.
3. At sanchi a cable car system (Gondola/Ropeway) should be constructed that will attract more tourists to this destination.
4. At Bandhavgarh restricted movements should be in the core area of the park.
5. No construction should be allowed for any tourist activity 5 km around the park.
6. At Bandhavgarh nearest bus stand should be at 10 km of distance from the park instead of Umaria which is 35 km.
7. The road passes through park and connects Bandhavgarh to Umaria should be taken to the boundary of the area in order to minimize disturbance to the wildlife.
8. Number of entry points should be decreased which is at present five.
9. More information should be provided on both electronic and print media about these tourist destinations.

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