

Tourism in India – A Geographical Study

Sanjib Sardar^{1*} Dr. Debasish Das²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore (MP)

² Research Guide, Department of Geography, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore (MP)

Abstract – Tourism has grown from the pursuits of a privileged few to a mass movement of people, with the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes in environment. Tourism as a service industry is international in character both in terms of demand and supply. Tourism is not merely leisure or entertainment or physical invigoration or mental rejuvenation. It also serves as a potent instrument for eliminating poverty, for ending employment, for promoting dialogue among civilizations and for providing channels in which streams of different culture could meet and mingle and create a new ethic-scape on which a fair, just humane and enlightened order could be built for the entire human race. This paper reflects, a geographical study on tourism of India.

Key Words – Tourism, People, Travel, Produces, Supported, Economy

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Tourism in India is important for the country's economy and is growing rapidly. The World Travel and Tourism Council calculated that tourism generated 16.91 lakh crore (US\$240 billion) or 9.2% of India's GDP in 2018 and supported 42.673 million jobs, 8.1% of its total employment. The sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.9% to ₹32.05 lakh crore (US\$450 billion) by 2028 (9.9% of GDP). In October 2015, India's medical tourism sector was estimated to be worth US\$3 billion, and it is projected to grow to US\$7–8 billion by 2020. West Bengal offers a colorful variety of experiences to the tourist. Its capital, Kolkata, is as cosmopolitan a city as any. In close proximity lie the Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is home to the Royal Bengal Tiger. Coastal areas like Digha and Mandarmani are popular tourism places in this state which attract their fair share of beach lovers. Practically, every country in the world is looking up to tourism as an important factor in the growth and development of national prosperity. The ever-growing size of the tourism market all over the world promises immense possibility and expectation in both developed and developing nations. With expanding global affluence, increasing facilities of air transportation and the considerable leisure time at people's disposal, the tourist traffic has been heading towards tremendous increase at an accelerated rate over the years.

2. CONCEPT OF TOURISM

Tourism has grown from the pursuits of a privileged few to a mass movement of people, with the urge to discover the unknown, to explore new and strange places, to seek changes in environment. Such mass movement of people can be attributed to contemporary migration pattern emanating from "a response to stress." In the developed countries at least three migration patterns in the society can be identified. These are:

- i. Migration to the city as a continuation of the 19th century phenomenon.
- ii. The journey to and from work as a result of large scale urbanization and spatial separation of work place and home in the developed countries.
- iii. The recreational travel is the newest pattern of migration in those countries and it is said to be a function of (i) and (ii) above.

It has been stimulated by the stress and uniformity of living and mobility provided by the same urban economic system. Being the newest migration pattern, recreational travel has experienced phenomenal growth rates, the impact of which has led to a major change in the life style of the developed countries.

Tourism as a word appeared in 1811 A.D., and was associated with mobility for recreation.⁵ According to Burton and Noad, “recreation is not defined as homogeneous entity. It includes all the pursuits other than those associated with the work for necessary tasks of personal and social nature.” An embraces a wide range of diverse pursuits. The recreation is not always a dominant motive for conditioning the travel, and, therefore, ‘tourism’ is to be associated with all the motivators of tourism.

Professor Hunizkar and Kraw stated, “Tourism is an entity of relations and facts constituted by travel and sojourn of person out of their normal place of domicile as far as this sojourn and travel are not motivated by any lucrative activity.” The World Tourism Organization (WTO) defines tourism as “activities related to persons travelling to and staying in places outside the r usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes.” This includes both international and domestic tourism.

‘International tourism’ has, further, been defined by the WTO as occurring when a traveler crosses an international border.

Further, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) uses economic definitions and defines the Travel and Tourism (T& T) Industry’ as that which produces products and services for visitor consumption, while the T&T Economy’ produces products and services for visitor consumption as well as products and services for industry demand.

The discussion stated so far brings out the following distinct elements:

- i. Involvement of travel by non-residents,
- ii. Stay of temporary nature in the area visited, and
- iii. Stay not connected with any remunerated activity or an activity involving earning.

Tourism, therefore, considered as a multi-dimensional approach / concept implies many things to many people. From the tourists’ point of view, it is travel, relaxation, a holiday, an expose to other cultures and traditions. From those who ‘sell’ tourism see the things differently. To them, it is an industry that is a source of income. Thus, it can be stated that it is an amalgam of phenomena and relationship arising from the movement of people ‘to’ and their ‘stay’ in different destinations. The ‘journey’ and ‘stay’ are the two necessary constituents of mass phenomenon called tourism.

3. BASIC COMPONENTS OF TOURISM

Tourism does not exist singly. It has certain basic components without which it cannot operate. In order

to understand it systematically, it is necessary to know the various components which together make tourism. These are: i) Transport, ii) Locale, and iii) Accommodation.

In order to reach his desired destination, a tourist has to travel and, therefore, some mode of transportation is necessary. The mode of transport a tourist generally uses may be a motorcar, an aero plane, a train or a ship that supports a traveler to reach his desired destination.

The locale implies the destination what it offers to the tourist. This may be in the form of natural attractions like sunshine, scenic beauty, sporting facilities; historical elements like art, sculpture, architectural design etc.

Accommodation is another important basic component that is essential to provide food and lodging facilities to a tourist. Locale with its attraction, amenities and facilities is considered most important as it motivates traveler to undertake a particular tour to a place. The selection of a particular place to tour, however, depends upon the interests and tastes of tourist, which vary from person to person. Besides, tourists’ demands are also very much susceptible to changes in fashion. In this context Peter has drawn up an inventory of various attractions that are significant in tourism. He mentioned five categories as shown in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1: PETER’S INVENTORY OF TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

1. Cultural	Sites and Areas of Archeological Interest; Historical Building and Monuments; Places of Historical Significance; Museums; Modern Culture; Political and Educational Institutions; Religious Institutions.
2. Traditions	National Festivals; Art and Handicrafts; Music; Folklore; Native Life and Customs.
3. Scenic	National Parks; Wildlife; Flora and Fauna; Beach Resort; Mountain Resort.
4. Entertainment	Participation and Viewing Sports; Amusement and Recreation Park; Zone and Oceanariums; Cinemas and Theaters; Night Life and Cuisine.
5. Other Attractions	Climate; Health Resort or Spas, Unique Attractions not Available Elsewhere.
Source: Peter, M. (1969): Tourism-A Community Approach, International Tourism, Hutchison & Co., London, pp. 148-49.	

Robinson, however, opined that the attractions of tourism are basically geographical in their character. Accordingly, he has categorized tourism attractions on the basis of geographical factors as shown in Table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2: GEOGRAPHICAL COMPONENTS OF TOURISM

1. Accessibility and Location.
2. Space.
3. Scenery:
 - a) Landforms, e.g., Mountains, Canyons, Coral Reefs, Cliffs etc.
 - b) Water, e.g., Rivers, Lakes, Waterfalls, Sea etc.
 - c) Vegetations, e.g., Forests, Grasslands, Deserts etc.
4. Climate: Sunshine, Clouds, Temperature Conditions, Rain and Snow
5. Animal Life:
 - a) Wildlife e.g., Birds, Zoos etc.
 - b) Hunting and Fishing.
6. Settlement Features:
 - a) Towns, Cities, Villages.
 - b) Historical Remains and Monuments.
 - c) Archaeological Remains.
7. Cultural: Ways of life, Traditions, Folklore, Art and Crafts etc.

Thus, it appears that tourism is a multi-dimensional phenomenon having heterogeneous character in nature. In fact, tourism is more often thought of as a market rather than as an industry. It needs hardly to be emphasized that tourism has now been accepted as an industry because of its economic significance. And it is one of those industries, that is capable of providing rapid economic growth of jobs, income, and standard of living and in activating other productive sectors in the receiving countries.

4. TOURISM-THE WORLD'S LARGEST INDUSTRY

The multi-faceted nature of tourism, its various links with the manufacturing and retail sectors and numerous seasonal or unofficial businesses make it extremely difficult to assess its market size. One

estimate, however, suggests that world-wide travel spending reached US \$ 488 billion. Despite the short term set-backs, the energy crisis and recessions of the late 1970s and early 1980s, tourism is seen as a growth industry of the future. Nations such as Spain, Austria, Portugal, Yugoslavia and Greece have based much of their post-War development through growth of their tourism sectors. The receipts from international tourism provide a valuable source of earnings for many countries both developed and developing. For instance, there were more visitor arrivals in Spain in 2000 (47.90 million)¹⁵ than the actual population of the country (39 million). Even, the developed nations like Canada, which derived over 11 percent of its Gross Domestic Products (GDP) from international visitors in 1989, rely heavily on the income from tourism.

Tourism as a service industry is international in character both in terms of demand and supply. The growth of international tourism was slow in the first part of the century, became rapid in the later part and became phenomenal since 1980s. In 1950, the number of tourists leaving their homes worldwide was 25 million. It increased to 100 million in 1964, 200 million in 1974, 500 million in 1992 and 703 million in 2002. The receipt from tourism has grown faster, US \$ 18 billion in 1970 increased to US \$ 105 billion in 1980 and US \$ 474 in 2002.

5. TOURISM IN INDIA

India as a land of endless fascination represents a charming cultural mosaic of Dravidians, Aryans, Greeks, Moguls, Persians, Turkish, Portuguese, French and British that makes for an extraordinarily diverse tourism destination. While modern tourism in India may be only an over half -century old, it has a classic tradition of domestic travel associated with the Hindu pilgrimages, called *Yatra* (holy travel). This unique art of travel evolved by the Hindu missionaries, which is regarded as highly organized, system-based, self-sustained, environment-oriented and community-led.

Despite immense potential and prospects for developing tourism in India, it did not even merit the allocation of the national planners regarding the provision of a separate Plan allocation in the First Five Year Plan (1951-56). However, from the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) onwards, this sector continued to receive the patronage of the planners and administrators through increasingly greater allocation over the successive Plans. It was during the Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90) that tourism was awarded the status of an industry.

Recognition of tourism as an industry by the Government signifies that the approved tourism activities are entitled to enjoy the same incentives and concessions given to an export industry. In the recent past, the industry has made considerable progress. This is corroborated by the fact that the

tourist traffic had steadily increased from 1.23 lakh in 1960 to about 19 lakh during the year 1992. In 2000, despite some disturbances at the national level, the figure reached at 26.49 lakh, though dropped slightly at 23.62 lakh in 2002, and finally recorded at an all-time high of 27.5 lakh (provisionally) in 2003.

In financial term, starting from a low base of Rs. 19.74 crores on account of foreign exchange earnings in 1962 by India tourism, in the course of three decades, the figure had increased to Rs. 5,951 crores in 1992. More encouraging is the fact that despite disturbances for various reasons both within and outside the country foreign exchange earnings by tourism in 2003 recorded at Rs. 16429 crores (provisionally) thereby registering an increase of 176.07 per cent over the 1992 figure.

The overall impact of tourism in Indian economy has also been significant. In 2001, total tourism receipts (visitor and non-visitor) in India are expected to generate Rs. 308 billion or 9.5 per cent of total exports as compared to a world average of 12.9 per cent. During the same year World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC) projected that India will generate Rs. 1,564 billion of economic activity, making India the 22nd largest tourism market in the world. In terms of employment, India's travel and tourism economy accounts for 25 million jobs (world rank 2).²⁶ This translates to a share of 6 per cent of all employment giving India a rank of 140.

Despite this significant achievement and contribution to the growth and development of national economy, tourism in India remained a low priority sector in comparison with the performance of some of the developing countries like, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Brazil etc. The position of India in world tourism was 53rd in terms of tourist arrivals with 0.34 per cent of world's share and ranked 38th in respect of world tourism receipts with 0.62 percent share in 2002, which appears to be a disheartening indeed.

6. TOURISM IN WEST BENGAL

West Bengal, a small State (locate between 85°50' East to 89°50' East longitude in the West and between 21°38' North to 27°01' North latitude in the South) not only the gateway to North-Eastern India, foreign countries viz., Nepal, Bhutan have both road and air connections with this State. Bangladesh is also adjacent to West Bengal. Because of the Netaji Subhas International Airport and the river ports one in Kolkata and other at Haldia, this State particularly its capital - the city of Kolkata which is more than three hundred year old constitute an ideal spring board for South-East Asia and Asia Pacific region.

West Bengal is immensely rich with the bounties of nature. The scenic beauty of Darjeeling hill areas, vast stretches of lush green tea estates underlying the hills, dense forests and wild lives in North Bengal, beautiful sea beaches in the Southern coast,

flora and fauna and the habitat of the great Royal Bengal Tiger in exotic deltaic region of the Sundarbans, make the State a place of irresistible charm and attractions to the tourists. Apart from this, the places of historical importance like, Murshidabad, Gour, Malda, Vishnupur and international cultural center, Santiniketan make the State an attractive tourist destination.

With a view to familiarizing all these tourist resources and promoting and developing tourism in the State, a Tourism Department was created for the first time as a wing of Home (Transport) Department, Government of West Bengal in 1960. With the rapid expansion of tourism activities and to ensure better performance, a separate Department started functioning in 1968. In order to generate greater efficiency in the field of implementing various developmental and commercial activities of the State Tourism Department, West Bengal Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (WBTDCL) started functioning with effect from April, 1974.

7. CONCLUSION

The tourism sector in West Bengal is an aggregation of different Government and non-Government agencies like, accommodation sector, travel trade and travel guides etc., that makes the sector complex and heterogeneous in character. It is an industry full of personalized services. It embraces ecology, heritage, religion and culture of locality, where tourism facilities are created. Tourism is a very sensitive industry. The sector at the moment faces a number of challenges like inadequate investment, infrastructural deficiencies, inappropriate Government's initiatives and incentives, lack of adequate trained human resources, ineffective marketing techniques and management etc.

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Corresponding Author

Sanjib Sardar*

Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore (MP)