

A Study of Swadesh Darshan Scheme and Tourist Destination in Haryana

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Abstract – Swadesh Darshan is a prestigious scheme of the Ministry of tourism, India has a variety of resources and there is need to develop major tourist circuits on specific themes to attract the tourists having the special interest in visiting such places. Under this scheme, only Kurkshetra is selected under Krishna circuit. The state Haryana has the potential of tourism due to its location and resources. This paper concludes the relationship between Swadesh Darshan scheme and tourist destination of Haryana.

Keywords: Swadesh Darshan, Tourist, Haryana

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INTRODUCTION

The Swadesh Darshan scheme launched to develop thematic tourist circuit to show India's unique cultural, historical, religious and natural heritage sites. The Union Tourism Ministry launched the Scheme in 2014-15 (FICCI, 2015). Two new schemes have been launched in the budget Swadesh Darshan and Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) in mission mode. The focuses of these schemes are to provide world-class infrastructure facilities to tourists at identified destinations.

Under this scheme, various themes which are unique and specific to the area like beaches, culture, heritage, wildlife, Buddhist, Tribal etc will be developing. Such theme based tourist circuits develop in a manner that supports locals provides job opportunities and fosters social integration without affecting the natural environment.

The main objectives of the schemes are concerned with the economic growth, job creation, development of potential tourist circuit, Promote cultural and heritage values, developing world-class infrastructure on the circuit, pro-poor tourism approach, and aware local communities about the benefits of tourism and to enhance tourist's satisfaction.

Tourist circuit is defined as a route has more than three well-known tourist destinations with entry and exit point. The Circuit could be restricted to a State/Union territory or could be a regional circuit covering more than one State/Union Territory based on the theme and sub-themes. Projects under the scheme shall be under the following identified themes; Ecotourism, Wildlife, Buddhist, Spiritual, Ramayana, Krishna, Coastal, Himalayan, Desert, Northeast, Rural, Tribal and Heritage.

The proposal for the Swadesh Darshan scheme sanctioned through three levels based on the need assessment and stakeholder interaction. The projects and proposals can flow from three levels based on the need assessment and stakeholder interactions. These levels are

- i. Ministry of Tourism
- ii. Central Agencies
- iii. State Governments/ UT Administrations.

Development of tourism infrastructures at places related to Mahabharata in Kurukshetra, Haryana covered under Krishna circuit. Major thrust area of development for sites of Jyotisar, Brahma Sarovar, Sannhit Sarovar, Narkatari: Baan Ganga, Amin: Abhimanyu Ka Tila. Bathing Ghat facilities (lockers, changing rooms, etc.), Construction of Mahabharata Theme Park, Water Channel (& Fountains) (part of landscape; implies river Saraswati), Multipurpose tourist information centre, Brahm Sarovar Facade Lighting & Brahm Sarovar Temple Lighting, Multimedia Laser Show with Musical Fountain, development of Parking and Public convenience facilities. Total project cost for integrated development of Krishna Circuit in Haryana is estimated at Rs. 96.00 Crore (Kumar, 2016).

Jyotisar: This is the spot at which Lord Krishna preached the Bhagwad Gita to Arjun. The waterbody, bathing ghats and small temples are fully renovated. A banyan tree, believed to be an offshoot of the tree under which Lord Krishna preached, stands at the entrance.

Brahm Sarovar: This vast water body is traditionally believed to have been conceptualized by Lord

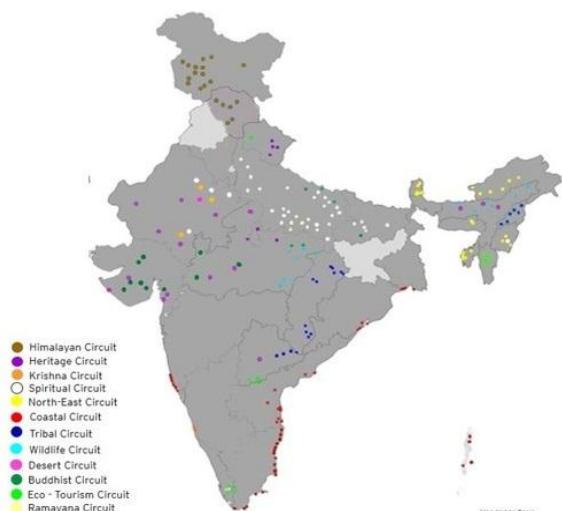
Brahma the Creator himself. Sarveshwar Mahadev Temple, katyani devi temple, Krishna and Arjun chariot and various ghats are the centre of attraction.

Sannehit Sarovar: Sannehit means congregation and it is believed that every moonless night and every solar eclipse, the waters of the seven sacred rivers congregates in this tank. There are temples like Dhruva Narayan, Gurga, Hanuman and Lakshmi-Narayan.

Sri Krishna Museum: Opened in 1991 and expanded in 1995, the museum has artifacts depicting Krishna in his various forms – as a God, as the reincarnation of Lord Vishnu, as a philosopher, hero, statesman and lover.

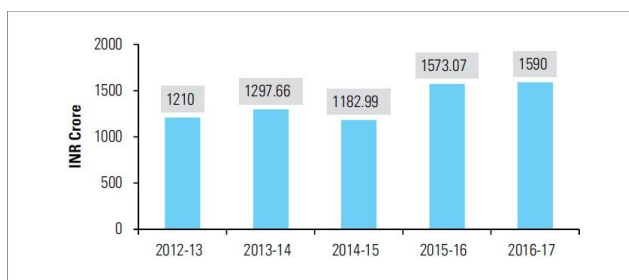
Bhishma Kund, Narkatari: the place bears a connection with the bhisma (Pitamaha), the mythology depicts that arjun created a bed of arrows for bhisma. The kund near temple called bangana or the bhisma kund.

Figure 1. Swadesh Darshan Themes



The figure clearly shows location of theme circuit, there 12 themes under this scheme and all destinations have potential to attract tourists. The newer themes are Ramayana Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Krishna Circuit and Himalayan circuit.

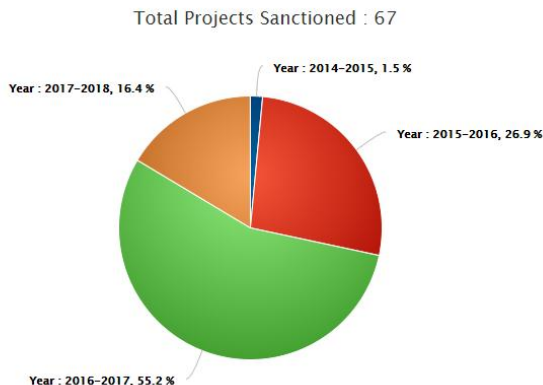
Figure 2. Budget Allocation to Tourism Sector under Union Budget



Source: www.indiabudget.nic.in

Allocation of budget to tourism sector is increasing year by year, in 2012-13 financial year the budget was 1210 Crore, whereas in the year 2016-17 it was 1590 crore. There is requirement of huge fund for the development tourism sector in India.

Figure 3. Total Projects Sanctioned Under Swadesh Darshan Scheme



www.swadeshdarshan.gov.in

Under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, 55.2% projects sanctioned in the year 2016-17 and only 1.5 projects in the year 2014-15. In the year 2015-16, sanctioned 26.9% and in the current year 2017-18 only 16.4%.

Kurukshetra was the best suited place for pilgrimage tourism in the state of Haryana. It has great pilgrimage centres for Hindus, and 860 places of pilgrimage related to Mahabharata even exist today (Tomer, 2011). Pilgrims significantly explore the places like famous temples of Bhadrakali temple, Brahma Sarovar, Bhishma Kund, Jyotisar, Sri Krishna Museum, Gita Birla Mandir, Pehowa, the famous Sikh Gurudwara and so on (Singh,2011).

Draft National Tourism Policy, 2015 elaborate Swadesh Darshan scheme also have negative impacts on environment and society, due to unplanned & unregulated development the ecosystem of the forests, islands, mountains and coasts bear the brunt of tourism. Under this scheme the government are planning to develop 700 uninhabited islands across India for film making, honeymoon destinations and for entertainment activities. The scheme is about to develop shoreline, aquamarine park, fragile Himalayan ecosystem and natural water bodies. Further, the feasibility of the schemes was not reported in these areas. For e.g. in the case of coastal tourism circuit proposed by the Swadesh Darshan scheme, there is enough evidence that the coastal tourism destinations are reeling under social impacts such as gambling, prostitution, drug abuse, abuse of children and serious environmental damage to coasts. Similar issues are prevalent in pilgrimage

and himalaya tourism destinations like Puri, gulmarg and Varanasi.

CONCLUSION

The state Haryana pioneered in highway tourism and has the potential of tourism but under the scheme Swadesh Darshan only one destination Kurukshetra selected for development. Haryana state is adjoined to national capital and 57% area covered under the National capital region, the state has many resources apart from Krishna circuit like Nahar Singh fort, Gujari Mahal Hisar, Sheikh Cheli Tomb Kurukshetra, Jal Mahal Narnaul, Kalesar National Park, Morni hills etc. Swadesh Darshan covered all these circuits without including Haryana tourism resources. Haryana may be tourism hub if developed and promoted in a proper manner.

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