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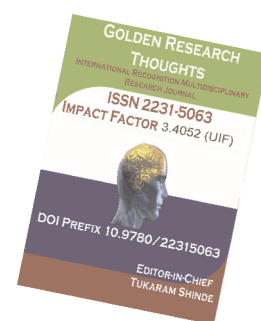


TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE IN CHHATTISGARH: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

Shobhit Bajpeyee¹ and Swati Tiwari²

¹Asstt. Professor, Bilasa Girls Government College, Bilaspur, C.G.

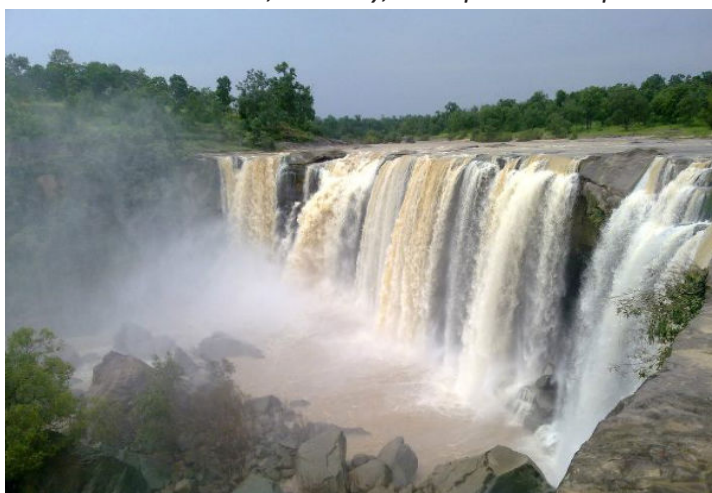
²Asstt. Prof. (Ad hoc), Gurughasidas Central University, Bilaspur, C.G.



ABSTRACT

Chhattisgarh has huge possibility of tourism development. Local inhabitants, rich cultural inheritance, flora and fauna, exceptional natural possessions can jointly build it up as an exceptional tourist destination. Government of Chhattisgarh is trying to promote tourism by inviting private entrepreneurs. Chhattisgarh is newly shaped state and is going through different challenges in this sector. Tourism has not been developed as important donor to state GDP so far. Present contribution is only 0.25 % of NSDP. There are 27 districts in Chhattisgarh and approximately each and every district is prosperous in natural resource and historical background. Some districts are famous for holy meaning. Centrally located and well linked to major cities and towns of the country by Railways, Roadways and Airways. Chhattisgarh is covered with almost 41% of forest area. This paper is study of various challenges faced by Chhattisgarh tourism industry. This study is a discussion paper based on secondary data collected from various research papers, surveys done by private and government agencies, books, news papers, magazines, etc Although, Chhattisgarh is connected with all the parts of the country with railways and roadways, still negligence of government and lack of entrepreneurial quality is the major cause of its backwardness. Various problems have been highlighted and possible solutions to the problem are suggested in this paper.

KEYWORDS : *Tourism, industry, entrepreneurship.*



INTRODUCTION :

Tourism is an activity done for entertainment, recreation and for utilizing spare time. Many people think that it is good source of gaining knowledge and they believe in exploring new areas, regions, cities and countries. Some people support the idea that it provides quality time with family and friends, in this busy life. A person's thinking and perception may differ regarding tourism, but tourism has proved it an important activity for the development of any city or country. It has

proved that it is not only a significant activity for developed countries but also for developing countries. In India, tourism industry has developed many folds. Under the supervision of government it is growing magnificently. It is attracting the entrepreneurs as the most happening industry to invest their capital.

Tourism is not at all a modern concept. If we look back into the history of the world, there have

been so many instances which tells us that man has been travelling and exploring all over the world. In ancient time travelling was done by man in search of new country, continent or finding new route to the existing country. They used to travel in search of new market for their goods and commodities. Trader and merchants travel long distances in order to create market for their products. Many people travel and try to explore new regions to collect knowledge.

They try to visit such place which has never been visited before by others. It has also been noticed that, since ancient time tourism helped in social, economical and cultural development of various countries. Tourism industry is considered as the most rapid growing industry and proving itself as largest employment generator. It helps in the development of nation directly or indirectly. It provides business opportunities in all areas. From small to big businessman, all get ample of chances to grow their business.

Tourism industry requires railways, roadways, waterways, electricity and water supply, accommodation, aviation, proper drainage system, safety and security services etc. Infrastructure represents bundles of services which is important for regional development, but are not provided sufficiently, or not at all by the private sector, due to the high degree of publicness (Biehl 1991, 9). Because of that, most infrastructure provision is determined by local government authorities.

Public infrastructure has been considered as “Economic Overhead Capital” or social overhead capital (e.g. Bergman and Sun 1996, Biehl 1986). This means that infrastructure can be seen as part of the production environment, which affects the production possibilities and the efficiency of firms and regions. Well developed infrastructure increases the productivity of private investment and regional output. (e.g. Hakfoort 1990; Johanson and Wigren 1996) thus, infrastructure can be used as an input or development factor by small tourism enterprises and tourism destinations.

STUDY AREA

This study is specifically confined to Chhattisgarh state. Chhattisgarh was constituted on 1st November 2000 but its heritage is as old as Stone Age. It is located in the central part of India between the 17 degree 46 min. North – 24 degree 5 min. North latitude and the longitude of 80 degree and 15 min. East – 84 degree 20 min East. Its close location with tropic of cancer has a major control on its climate. It is land locked by Maharashtra in the South West, Madhya Pradesh in North West, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand in the North, Orissa in the East, and Telangana in the South. Total land area of the state is 135194 sq. km. it has considerable plain area in the middle. In the North it is enclosed by Satpura Mountains. The river Mahanadi and its tributaries in the central plains make its land fertile. This river moves transversely the plains of Chhattisgarh and is the largest river of the state. The Southern area is known for Baster plateau. The pats (hills) make the river structure in the state. The main rivers are Mahanadi, Hasdeo, Indravati, and Shivenath. Chhattisgarh neither has coastal boundaries nor does it share any international boundary. About 41% of the land area is covered by forests. The Indo-Gangetic plain that lies in the northern part of the state is watered by the Rihand River, a tributary of Ganges. The Deccan plateau on the south divides the Godavari River and its tributary Indravati. Owing to such diverse geography it enjoys tropical weather, good harvest, amazing flora and fauna.

OBJECTIVE AND RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to highlight various issues of tourism infrastructural development in Chhattisgarh. It broadly covers following objectives:

- 1.To study growth and performance of tourism in Chhattisgarh.
- 2.To analyse the tourism destination and products of Chhattisgarh.

- 3.To identify the major challenges before Chhattisgarh state tourism industry.
- 4.To suggest the solution for the betterment of the tourism industry and promoting it as eco-friendly tool of economic development.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

Tourism industry is considered as pollution free industry. It gives great opportunity of development to both government and private sector. Employment is generated for local people and at the same time cottage & small scale industry get chances of development. Goods produced in such industries get a good market at local level. Tourism industry develops various infrastructural facilities like: development of roadways railways, aviation, hotel, banking, tele-communication, etc. It gives good support to economically backward areas by increasing their income level. Tourists have different taste and demand. To fulfill such demands continuous improvement in services is to be made. Revenue earned by this industry helps government to maintain archeological sites, historical places, forts, statues, etc. It catalyses economic activities, raises standard of living of local people, it brings employment opportunities; it helps in conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage. Planned tourism development leads to environmental protection by making people aware of various ways of protecting environment and natural resources along with business.

METHODOLOGY

This is basically discussion paper based on secondary data. The study utilizes data from published books, research journals, research papers, newspapers, and magazines, survey reports by private and government agencies and websites. The nature of research work is explorative and whole study done by descriptive method.

MAJOR TOURIST DESTINATION AND PRESENT SCENARIO

Chhattisgarh is very rich in natural beauty and at the same time it is endowed with rich cultural heritage and archeological sites. Its various historical sites itself define the richness of Chhattisgarh state. Major tourism destinations are:

Bhoramdeo: It is located in Kawardha district near Chhapri village. The temple here is constructed by Phani Nagwansh king Gopal Dev in 1089 A.D. It is also known as Khajuraho of Chhattisgarh. It focuses on rural tourism and bhoramdeo festival is celebrated here every year. Malhar, Talaagaon, Deepadih, Sirpur, Rajim, Barsoor, Shivarinarayan, etc are there in Chhattisgarh having historical importance.

Other religious and archeological sites are Damakheda, Girodhपुर in Baloda bazaar district, Champaran in Raipur district is birth place of Mahaprabhu Vallabhacharya. It is named after Champkeshwar Mahadev. On the occasion of Magh Poornima fair is organised. Kharaud is famous for temples build by Somwanshi ruler. Lord Laxamneshwar Shiv temple is famous place to visit. It is also known as Kaashi of Chhattisgarh. Fair is organised on the occasion of Shivratri. It is 3 km from Janjgir Champa district. Its ancient name was Indrapur. Ratanpur is 26 km from bilaspur. It is very famous religious and historical place. It has significant archeological sites and considered as 1st capital of Chhattisgarh. It is also known as city of lakes. Other places to visit are Mahamaya Temple, Lakhani Devi Temple, Shivmandir and Ram tek etc.

Dongargarh is situated in Rajnandgaon district and famous for Bamleshwari Devi Tample and Buddha statue of 30 feet on Pragyagiri Hill. Dantewada is famous for Danteshwari Temple and sangam of Shankini-Dankini River.

Arang is situated on national highway number 6 and also known as City of Temples. Bhaandewal temple was built in 12th century. Here temple has statues of Jain teerthankars namely Neminath, Ajitnath and Shreyansh.

Ramgarh pahadi is situated in Sarguja district and famous for Jogimara caves. These caves are famous for painting of Mourya regime. It is estimated to be painted around 3rd century B.C. The ancient drama school of the world is at Sita Bengra caves made around 3rd century B.C.

Manpaat known as Shimla of Chhattisgarh situated in Sarguja district. It is famous for two Budhha monasteries, Sarbhanja waterfall, Tiger point waterfalls are other places to visit. Singhanpur is the oldest art gallery of paintings discovered by Anderson in 1910. It is situated in Raigarh district. Other places to visit are Kabra hill; Basnajaar, Karmagah, Khairpur Sutighat, Chitwa-Dongri, Khair Kheda of Kanker district, etc are famous for prehistoric sites of archeological importance.

Famous waterfalls of Chhattisgarh are: Chitrakoot water fall which is also known as Niagara of India. This is known for its widest and maximum water body waterfall. Teerathgarh near Jagdalpur in Kanger valley is the highest water fall of Chhattisgarh (300 feet) on river Moongababar. Indravati River near Barsoor falls from Bodh Ghati hill and forms 7 waterfalls namely Bodh Dhara, Pandav Dhara, Kapil Dhara, Krishna Dhara, Shiv Dhara, Bann Dhara and Shiv Chitra Dhara. It looks much more beautiful than Bhedaghat waterfall of Jabalpur. There are more than 2 dozen waterfalls in Chhattisgarh.

National parks: There are 3 national parks and 9 wildlife sanctuaries in Chhattisgarh.

National parks are- Sanjay national park, Indravati national park, Kangervalley national park. Sanctuaries of Chhattisgarh are- Sitanadi in Dhamtari, Achankmaar in Mungeli, Gomarda in Raigarh, Badalkhol on Jashpur, Semarsot in Balrampur, Timoprpingla in Surajpur, Udanti in Gariyaband, barnavapara in Balodabazar and Pamedh in Bijapur.

Growth and performance since inception of state

Indian tourism sector is one of the largest service industries of the country in terms of GDP and foreign exchange earnings. FDI flows in tourism sector during April 2000 to April 2013 were US\$ 6664.20 million. Foreign tourists arrivals

(FTA) during April 2013 stood at 0.44 million as compared to 0.43 million in June 2012. It shows growth rate of 2.5%. Domestic tourism is likely to grow by 15%-20% in over next 5 years. Total number of tourists visited Chhattisgarh in 2008 were 4.44 lakh out of which 4.43 lakh were domestic and 0.01 lakh were foreign tourists. In the year 2009 number of domestic tourist increased to 5.12 lakh where as foreign tourists remain same in number. But in the year 2010 visitors increased to 5.68 lakh and foreign tourist number increased to 0.02 lakhs.

Table 01: Tourists visited to Chhattisgarh

Tourists visit	2008	2009	2010
Domestic (in lakh)	4.43	5.13	5.68
Foreign (in lakh)	0.01	0.01	0.02
Total	4.44	5.14	5.70

Source: Indian tourism statistics, 2010, Ministry of Tourism, New Delhi.

Chhattisgarh tourism board is focusing on the tourist arrival from 1.5 million in 2012 to 3 million in 2015. For this purpose state tourism board has received Rs.113.5 crores from Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. This amount is sanctioned for projects prioritization. Board is concentrating on promotion of Gangrel dam, largest water body of Chhattisgarh, Sirpur, Kodar Tandula for eco-tourism and for promotion of rural tourism, fairs and festivals. Recent annual report of union tourism ministry on the number of tourists visiting Chhattisgarh is 1.49 crore tourists' footfalls between June 2011- may 2012. This figure shows enormous and extraordinary leap as compared to its own data of previous year. The state tourism department shows a remarkable increase in tourism. 1.25 lakh domestic tourist and 3345 foreign tourists as compared to the data of February 2012- 32.5 lakh domestic tourists visited Chhattisgarh and in only October 2011- 806 foreign tourists visited Chhattisgarh.

State wise tourist contribution shows that Maharashtra shares 16.9% followed by Madhya Pradesh 16.7%, west Bengal 13.9%, and Orissa 12.1% Gujarat 11.3%, Jammu and Kashmir 2.1%. As regards to above mentioned data about foreign tourist visitors, Australia accounted for 14% followed by UK 12% USA 11% Japan and Nepal 10 % each. Hotel occupancy rate was maximum of 71% in October 2011 and lowest in January 2012 at 34%. The peak season of domestic tourist arrival is February, March, and September. And the; lowest DTA is May and June.

In case of FTA peak season is September, October and November and maximum tourist visit in the month of October. Lowest FTA was registered in the month of July and January.

Table: 02 distributions of state wise domestic tourists in %

State	% of Domestic Tourists
Maharashtra	16.9
Madhya Pradesh	16.7
West Bengal	13.9
Orissa	12.1
Gujarat	11.3
Rajasthan	7.3
Punjab	3.9
Delhi	3.1
Chhattisgarh	2.5
Jammu Kashmir	2.1
Others	10.1
Total	100

Table: 03 Distribution of country wise foreign tourists in %

Country	% of tourists
Australia	14
UK	12
USA	11
JAPAN	10
NEPAL	10
CANADA	9.0
SRILANKA	7.0
GERMANY	6.0
BANGLA DESH	5.0
FRANCE	4.0
SOUTH AFRICA	4.0
OTHERS	8.0
TOTAL	100

If data on accommodation unit is studied, out of 619 accommodation unit 3 hotels are of 4 star rating, 2 hotels of 2 star rating and 1 hotel of 1star rating was found. Whereas no 5 star deluxe hotel, 5 star, 3 star hotels in the whole state is found.

Nature of availing tour packages it has been noticed that foreign visitors avail this facility as compared to domestic visitors. 89% of foreigners avail this facility as compared to 11% do not such

facility. Domestic tourists least interested in tour packages. Their ratio is 3-4 % those who are availing tour packages as compared to 96-97 % are not availing packages tour. 92% of domestic tourists make self arrangement of travelling.

Table: 04 Travel Arrangements

Availing package tour (In Percentage)	Domestic Visitors (approx)	Foreign Visitors
Tourists availing package tour	4	89
Tourists not availing package tour	96	11
Total	100	100

Challenges and future prospects

Chhattisgarh is a tribal state and 32% (approximately) population belongs to tribe and at the same time around 41% land area is covered under forest. The biggest challenge is to protect and preserve the natural beauty and resources of Chhattisgarh. Nature has given plenty of mineral resources, hill, mountain ranges, waterfalls, wild life, flora and fauna to Chhattisgarh. Chhattisgarh owes rich cultural heritage as well. To preserve cultural heritage along with the development is another challenge before the Chhattisgarh state. There are many other challenges also, which Chhattisgarh tourism has to overcome. These are:

1. **Infrastructural development:** Chhattisgarh is lacking behind in proper infrastructural facilities like roadways, railways, hotels, guides and tour and travel agents. Boarding lodging, lack of signage, other connectivity, improper communication network, less number of shopping area. All these factors are the challenges to overcome.
2. **Low quality of human resource:** Tourism industry is apparently hospitality industry. It is utmost important to have trained human resource for this industry. But in Chhattisgarh people in this industry are less aware and not trained.
3. **In appropriate connectivity and help desks:** In Chhattisgarh there are insufficient numbers of help desks and lack of proper transportation connectivity is also faced by tourists. Government participation is low in this sector. Tourists have to make arrangement by themselves for transportation.
4. **Sustainable utilization of social and cultural factors:** Development brings destruction and deterioration in values, culture and social ethics. To preserve the rich culture is a great challenge before this industry.
5. **Back-up to local economy:** This should also support to economic conditions of local service providers, manufacturers, sellers, cottage industrialist and over all local people. A direct benefit should be realized by the local people, than only they will let this industry to grow.
6. **Marketing of various plan and products:** Lack of marketing and inappropriate advertisement also keeps the place unexplored.
7. **Time of launching new product:** Tour agents and government both are not having proper idea about exact time of launching of various packages and schemes etc.
8. **Proper development of product:** Government and private tour agent do not know how to bring-up the new product and plan, So that it will attract more tourists.
9. **Right combination of attractive components:** Lack of other factors like market of local handicrafts, entertaining events, games, fairs and festivals etc. is found. Presence of all this factors makes a right combination of a complete tour to a place.
10. **Concrete plan for marketing:** No concrete plan for marketing of products and plans is there with

private entrepreneurs and government.

11. Inefficient use of marketing tools: Industry is lacking behind in proper utilization of marketing tools. Only dependency on government efforts and action will not make this state a tourist hub of the country, private sector should also come forward and utilize various marketing tools like signage, billboards, posters, and brochures, leaflets, organize events like fairs and festivals, discount coupons on local handicrafts articles etc.

Future

Chhattisgarh government is promoting it as biggest tourist hub of the country. There are ample of opportunities of investment by private sector in development of hotels, motels, resorts, shopping malls and other tourism related assets. Huge investments can be done in recreational facilities and restaurants. Chhattisgarh government is planning to encourage eco-tourisms circuits. So that protection of environment and development both can be achieved. Local communities can be encouraged to come up and participate in developing tourism industry.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Success comes to those who make quality input and continuous hard work. Customers also become brand loyal only when they are satisfied with the quality of goods and services. For the success full journey Chhattisgarh tourism industry should go for professionals possessing knowledge, skills and positive attitude who make their efforts for the development of this industry.

Focused master plan will bring more prosperity to this industry in the state. Sustainable tourism development will also need ecological balance. Natural resources cannot be regained if once it is destroyed. Tourism industry also brings outside visitors close to the cultural and social aspects of that particular tourist area. So to reflect original culture and tradition is a big challenge before the industry in this changing world. Preservation of culture is very important. Concrete frameworks of various actions are necessary to design. This should ensure maximum benefit to community, entrepreneurs, government and above all Mother Nature. Systematic approach is a standing requirement to this industry.

SUGGESTION

1. Proper master plan to be prepared, keeping in the mind about the unique qualities of the various regions of the state.
2. Appropriate development of transportation, connectivity to different parts of the country, communication network and other tourist facilities are required.
3. Good number of help desks in the major cities of the state should be established.
4. Signage should be made available at large prints and that too at eye level.
5. All such tour and travel agencies, organisation or firms should display various facilities offered by them at railway stations, bus terminals, bus stops and taxi stands.
6. The integral part of all the campaign should be making tourism information easily accessible by the tourists.
7. Make realize the importance and value of natural environment, flora and fauna, monuments, cultural heritage, forts temples, etc. and also develop the respect for these factors.
8. Teach tourists, local people, service providers to practice conservation of natural assets and culture as a part of life.
9. Proper and directed research should be done by private and government agencies. These researches

are helpful in solving various problems.

10. Proper safety and security measures should be taken at railway stations, bus terminals, hotels, motels, shopping areas and during transportation, etc

11. Medical facilities, arrangements of ambulance, doctors medicines should be made available at all tourists places.

12. Rescue team should be well trained to cop-up with any type of emergent situation.

There is much scope of development of almost all type of tourism areas in Chhattisgarh. These areas are mainly food tourism, eco-tourism, geo-tourism, biodiversity tourism, rural tourism, socio-cultural tourism, agri-tourism, industrial tourism, luxury tourism, rail trail tourism, etc. Planned and strategic steps will bring tourism industry a boom in coming years to Chhattisgarh.

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