

Scope of Tourism Development in Bharatpur District (A Geographical Study)

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1. Introduction

Travelling and tourism has been an integral part of Indian Culture & Tradition. Tourism industry is the most vibrant tertiary activity and multibillion industries in India. The potential and performance of India's tourism industry need to gauge in terms of its socio – economic magnitudes. This paper discusses how India is emerging as popular tourist destination in the world driven by the focus on innovation and creating value for tourists. It aimed to change the attitude and behaviour toward foreign tourist by stressing on the aspect that a guest has been held in high esteem in India since ancient times. It also examines the impact of India's economic growth on tourism, contributors to economic growth role of tourism industry in India GDP, foreign versus domestic tourists, the paper also explores that there has been a tremendous growth in tourism in India because of the policies of the government and support from all levels. World tourism is considered as a significant factor in the economy of many nations, today tourism related infrastructure in various parts of the country has improved the quality of life of the local people and helped to promote local arts and crafts. Tourism has contributed to increase awareness about conservation of the environment and the cultural heritage. Tourism is the fastest growing industry in modern world. People have always travelled to distant parts of the world to see monuments, arts and culture taste new cuisine etc.

Define the word tourism is very difficult, tourism means different things to different people, because it is an abstraction of a wide range of consumption activities which demands products and services form a wide range of industries in the economy, for the example OECD (1991) observes that "tourism is a concept that can be interpreted differently depending on the context. Tourism may cover the tourists, or what the tourists do, or the agents which cater to them, and so on." Similarly, WTO (1995) defines tourism as the activates of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for no more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purpose, " while at the same time WTO (1996) state that "tourism is thus a rather general term, which can refer to the consumption of tourists, to the production units supplying goods and services particularly to tourists or even to a set of legal units or of geographical areas related in a way to other.

Bharatpur district is one of the important and solitary districts not only in Rajasthan but also in India. The district is very close to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. It also reveals a treasure of great tourism resources. Geographically the Bharatpur district has considerable varieties in relief, climate

and socio – economic status. The district has vast and great tourism potential of different socio – cultural and historical backgrounds in all of its nine Tehsils. The tourism of district is depending on natural as well as cultural resources, Keoladeo bird sanctuary is a tourist destination and attraction for tourist. World heritage forts, religious places, delicious food, bird sanctuary, wildlife, tourism festivals, monuments, historical forts, marine biodiversity and lifestyle of the local people provide a beautiful attraction for tourists. The Bharatpur district has a great potential for the better development of tourism. At present there is no proper geographical investigation of Bharatpur District to analyze the present status. This is essential for better development of tourism in the Bharatpur district. Tourism can generate employment opportunities for the local people and plays a vital role in the development of tourism and in the economic development of the district. So this paper is an effort to disclose tourism development possibilities in study area

2. Objective of the Study Area

The major objective of the study is to make a geographical investigation of tourism in the Bharatpur district. Following are the specific objective of the study-

- To evaluate the status of the existing plans and schemes.
- To list and evaluate existing potential tourist destinations and their classification into standalone destinations / circuits.
- To assess the status of existing infrastructure broken up according to various departments.
- To analyse current traffic flows to the major destinations and assess the ability of the destinations to manage the traffic.
- To identify existing and new tourism projects in the major destinations including an outline feasibility of their projects and prioritisation of these on the basis of income and employment potential including the development of cultural centres, handicraft shops, health resorts, aggregate investments and their phasing.

Methodology and source of Data

The present study is based on the data collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through intensive field work by visiting various destinations in the study region.

- 1) Questionnaire was prepared and filled up by the tourists and the local people at the tourist places in the study region.
- 2) Tourist, local people tourist guide and tourism related authorities were interviewed.

Secondary data was collected through District Census Hand Book, District Gazetteer, Published and unpublished Materials, Travel Book, newspapers, periodicals, etc.

The information related to geographical background, origin of tourists, economic status, mode of transport, infrastructural facilities etc. used by tourists, was collected through the questionnaire. The behavioural attitude of tourist at tourist destination in Bharatpur district and tourist's opinion and impact of tourism on residents are calculated with the help of percentage method.

Tourism possibility and tourists places in Bharatpur

In 1733 AD, Raja Badan Singh's son, Suraj Mal had shown signs of promise, when he captured the fort of Bharatpur from Khemkaran, the rival chief whom he killed and thus laid the foundation of Bharatpur city. Maharaja Suraj Mal displayed immense courage and carved a niche for himself in the midst of political disorder. Gathering around him fiercely martial jat peasants, he went from one success to another. He accompanied Emperor Muhammad Shah against Ali Muhammad Ruhela and in 1748 AD, at the battle of Bagru, he led the Jaipur vanguard against the Marathas. He also defeated the commander – in chief of the Mughal emperor. Despite being a very religious man he was secular. The history of Bharatpur dates back to the epic age, when the Matsya Kingdom flourished here in the 5th century BC the Matsyua were allies of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata war.

According to tradition the name of Bharatpur is traced to Bharat, the brother of Lord Rama of Ayodhya whose other brother Laxman was given the high place of family deity of the ruling family of Bharatpur. His name also appears in the state seals and coat of arms. Bharatpur is also called the Eastern gateway of Rajasthan Maharaja Surajmal, Apart from being a brave General was also a great builder. He built numerous forts and places complex at Deeg. Bharatpur is today known the world over for its Keoladeo Ghana National Park.

3. Tourist Destinations in Bharatpur

a) Bharatpur Palace

It is a fine fusion of Mughal and Rajput styles of architecture and was built in various phases by different Maharajas. The magnificent apartments are richly decorated with patterned floor tiles having exquisite and intricate designs. The museum occupies the main central wing displaying collections dating back to the 2nd century AD which demonstrates the art and skill of the region.

b) Government Museum

The building – Kamra Khas, within the fort, has been converted into a museum displaying a rich collection of antiquities, exquisite sculptures and some ancient inscriptions. The sculptures speak volumes about the art and culture that flourished here in those times. The inscriptions are of immense historical value and help in tracing the royal lineage and local life.

c) Ganga Mandir (Temple)

Maharaja Bazwant Singh started the construction of this big temple in 1845. The construction was carried out by a unique method where all persons employed in the service of the state, were asked to donate one month's salary of their service or any raise in pay toward the shrine. The temple is a beautiful piece of architecture.

d) Laxman Mandir (Temple)

This temple is famous for beautiful stone work with elaborate carvings from doorways to ceilings, pillars, walls and arches. The temple is dedicated to Laxman, brother of Lord Ram.

e) Keoladeo Ghana National Park

As the monsoon arrives, birds from every part of the country start flying into the Park. Migratory waterfowls – even though the Siberian cranes once the pride of Keoladeo – are not coming for the past few years – are a major attraction. These waterfowls visit the park in hordes during the month of October. The rosy starling marks the beginning of the arrival of migratory birds. The most noticeable waterfowls coming to the park are the bar-headed and grey lag geese. The ducks spotted here are pintail, common teal, ruddy shelduck, mallard, widgeon, shoveler, common shelduck, red crested pochard, hadwall etc. Predatory birds like the imperial eagle, steppe and tawny eagle, spotted eagle, marsh harrier and laggar falcon are attracted towards the Park, completing the avian food chain of the ecosystem, some of them, like the shorted eagle lesser spotted eagle and shikra, are the residents of the Park. About 11 sq Kms of the Park is covered by water, the remaining portion is rich in bird life like the kingfisher, red vented and white cheeked bulbul, babblers, quails, partridges, sunbirds, sparrows, parakeets and orioles, which live in bushes and burrows. These winged beauties carry on their activities all the year round, thus making this Park a pilgrimage for bird lovers and an ornithologist's delight. Animals like the black buck.

f) Sambar

Largest Indian antelope, spotted deer and nilgais also show their presence here, though they are greatly outnumbered by the winged fraternity. Pythons can also be observed, at some places, lazing in the sun. Saras cranes, the tallest flight birds, nest in exposed and open areas, both partners share the duty of hatching, while changing incubating duties, they come together, raise their neck and give out shrill trumpeting calls in unison, fanning their feathers at the same time. The newborn chicks are only 10 cm. in size but grow up to one metre in height within a year. Vehicles are only permitted up to Shanti Kutir inside the Park. The Electric van of the forest Department in the sanctuary can be engaged although the best way to explore the Park is on foot, bicycle or cycle rickshaws which are available on hire.

g) Lohagarh Fort or the Iron Fort

Conceived and designed to last for years – Lohagarh Fort, true to its name, stood solidly against many attacks by the British, frustrating them to no end. It faced the British onslaught four times and after a long siege they had to withdraw, but finally it was captured by Lord Lake for the British. It is very different from the other forts in the State. There is no flamboyance associated with this fort but it

radiates an aura of strength and magnificence. The fort is surrounded by a moat, which was filled with water to ward off the enemy attacks. Sandy battlements strengthened the sandy ramparts, thus the enemy guns proved of no avail. Some interesting monuments in the fort are Kishori Mahal, Mahal Khas, Moti Mahal and Kothi Khas Jawahar Burj, and fateh Burj inside the fort, were built by Surajmal to commemorate the victories over the Mughals and British. The Ashtadhatu (eight- metal) gateway has paintings of huge elephants.

h) Bayana

Bayana is 45 Kms. From Bharatpur between the two ranges of the Aravali hills running more or less parallel to each other close to the left bank of Gambhir River, formerly a tributary of Banganga. The famous fort known as Vijay Garh (Vijay Garh) was built by the famous King Banasur, in the time of Lord Krishna and was renovated by Maharaja Vijay Pal. The fort here is considered to be the 3rd largest in India. The Palace, a high tower and bhim lath stand out as landmarks. The fort was held by Muhammad Ghori (1196 AD) Sikandar Lodi (1492) and Hurnayun (1535 AD) in 1526 AD the first Mughal emperor Babar Described it as one of the most famous forts in India. Aine – Akbari mentions that in former times Bayana was the capital of a province of which Agra was a dependant village. Emperor Akbar witnessed a march past of his troops from a place near Bayana town known as “Chardare” which has an inscription on it. The noble and literature of the Mughal court. Mir Mohammed Masum, engraved this.

i) Deeg Palace

This fort built by Raja Surajmal stands majestically over a slightly elevated point. It is surrounded by impressive moats, ramparts and gateways. The interiors are mostly ruins now. But the watch tower still stands keeping an eye over the city and the palace. A gun captured from Agra Fort is placed here. Another defunct cannon, which was captured from Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761 AD) who seized the fort for six months guards the vantage point.

j) Bandh Baretha

Bandh Baretha, old wildlife reserve of the rulers of Bharatpur state is about 65km from Bharatpur city. There is a dam on Kakund River. The foundation stone of this dam was laid in 1866 by Maharaja Jaswant Singh and completed in 1897 – 88 during Maharaja Ram Singh's period. There is an old palace, which is still the private property of Bharatpur Royal Family. Animals like sambhar, chital, blue bull, wild boar, hyena and leopard inhabit Bandh – Baretha. It is also inhabited by 200 rare species of birds. A number of bird watchers inhabit this place.

k) Kaman

Kaman is a very old town, also known as Kamawan situated in the north of Bharatpur. It is a sacred town of Hindus as it forms a part of Braj area where Lord Krishna spent his early life. Its former name is said to have been Brahampore, but Raja Kama Sen, the maternal grandfather of Krishna, changed it to Kaman after his own name. Kaman is the short name of Kadambawana for numerous Kadamba trees are found here. Kaman is a place of pilgrimage, which is visited by a large number of vaishnavas in the month of Bhadon as a part

of Banyatra. The remains of a temple/ mosque consisting of 84 pillars, name chourasi Khamaba's still exist here. The pillars are ornamented and sculpted. Kaman has long been under the rule of Jaipur but was conquered and annexed by Maharaja Jawahar Singh. Some palaces of Jaipur Chief still exist here. Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh took the idols of Madan Mohanji and Gokul Chandraman to his newly built city of Jaipur but due to some reason the idols were brought back to Kaman.

4. Fair & Festival

Brij Mohatsav (FEB. Every Year)

All the fairs and festivals of Rajasthan are celebrated with traditional rituals, but Bharatpur's proximity to Uttar Pradesh shows a great influence of the State's culture. Bharatpur lies close to Braj Bhoomi – the birthplace of Lord Krishna and where he spent his childhood. The Raas Leela, depicting the life of Krishna, is performed by professionals selected. A rich cultural heritage of unique local folk arts, handicrafts, foods and festivals, rich wildlife and biotic life are resources available for the ideal tourism in the district. Therefore, it reveals that there is a tremendous scope for tourism development in the Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.

5. Conclusion

Tourism development in Rajasthan till the recent past was centered on the tourist who was colloquially as a person travelling for leisure, recreation and holidays. In today's context, this definition of 'tourist' is too narrow for tourism planning purpose. In a broader sense a tourist would be defined as a person who travels away from home and whose main purpose of trip is other than the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited, whatever his reason be. Broadly these reasons could be classified as below.

- Leisure, recreation and holidays.
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Business and professional
- Health treatment
- Religion and pilgrimage
- Other (weekly haats, etc.)

The rationale for including these categories is that there are activities to the local tourism economy. These categories would include the foreign, the inter – state as well as the intra state traveller. Thus as seen above there is a strong need to have a holistic approach to tourism development, which is sustainable, participative and responsible leading to overall development to the Bharatpur district and the state, Rajasthan.

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