

Domestic Tourism in Rajasthan

- Swot Analysis

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Rajasthan is one of the most important tourist destinations in India and South-East Asia. Domestic tourism is believed to represent a vehicle for retaining hard currency that might otherwise leave the country in the form of outbound travel expenditures in foreign destinations. As domestic tourism quantifies nearly five times the size of international tourism of any average country but the adequate importance has not yet been given to it or we can say not yet taken the organized form in our country i.e. India. In the present article, a review of the sector's competitive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats indicates that it has considerable growth potential. A separate SWOT analysis after examining the available resources could prove beneficial and is necessary to chalk out the target market groups, their strengths, weakness, threats & opportunities. It helps in designing marketing strategies to promote domestic tourism in Rajasthan. As a conclusion of this article, although tourism is a fickle industry, subjects to consumer whims and fancies beyond the industry's control, it is also a dynamic and exciting industry. In the end, few of the major suggestions are also presented to envisage the broad spectrum of this dynamite.

Keywords: Rajasthan, Tourism, SWOT etc.

Introduction

The World Tourism Organization has referred to the domestic tourism as the one involving residents of a country visiting their own country, in this case people travel outside their normal domicile to other areas within the country. People find it easy to travel domestically because there are no language, currency and documentation barriers. Their own language serves as a medium of communication. The currency which is used in everyday life continues to be the media of exchange. There is no need to meet particular requirements of documentation. Moreover, domestic tourism has no balance of payments implications. It is a substitute for foreign tourism and results in the having of foreign currency for the country of residents.

Domestic tourism is believed to represent a vehicle for retaining hard currency that might otherwise leave the country in the form of outbound travel expenditures in foreign destinations. By encouraging spending by affluent local populations in domestic locations, foreign exchange is saved without implementing potentially regressive deterrents to outbound travel.

As domestic tourism quantifies nearly five times the size of international tourism of any average country but the adequate importance has not yet been given to it or we can say not yet taken the organized form in our country i.e. India.

Being dynamic in nature domestic tourism is the only one which forms base for international tourism. Considering the

volume and its reliability in terms of seasonality greater emphasis is now laid on domestic tourism in the interest of coordinated economic development and giving or providing the citizens the chance and facilities to enjoy the bounties of God and man-made creations of Tourism. It has well been observed that domestic tourism provides an opportunity in terms of better utilization of tourism infrastructure and improves their returns, as well as shows great support in lean season and international strife's and turmoil's.

Traditionally the domestic tourist has never been given the importance that he deserves because of certain prejudices and preconceived notions that are chiefly based on the assumption that the domestic tourist can not become a major source of the generation of revenues in comparison to the international tourists.

However this approach has been one of the biggest and yet unnoticed deterrent in the growth of tourism in India as a whole. Without creating a strong environment for domestic tourism the success in international tourism will remain illusive. One of the major drawbacks of ignoring the domestic tourism sector is that it closes out the possibilities of the exploitation of available resources and the vast potential of the domestic tourist, which when properly utilized, may give a major boost to the economy of tourism and that of the entire country.

The assumption that the domestic tourists do not have a big paying capacity and therefore, any significant attention towards the sector may not prove to be fruitful. The experience

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of post-independence tourism in India has proved that the entire sector of tourism lives under a constant threat of the political churning within the nation and on the International level.

Domestic Tourism registers an impressive growth during 2010:

Market Research Division of Ministry of Tourism compiles data on "domestic and foreign tourist visits to States/ UTs" received from Ministries / Departments of Tourism of various State Governments and UT Administrations. Following are the important highlights of data for 2010:

(a) Domestic Tourist Visits to States/ UTs

- During 2010, the number of domestic tourist visits to the States/UTs was 740 million as compared to 669 million in 2009 and 563 million in 2008.
- During 2010, the number of domestic tourist visits to States/UTs registered an increase of 10.7% over 2009 as compared to increase of 18.8% in 2009 over 2008.
- The top ten States in terms of number of domestic tourist visits (in millions) during 2010 were Andhra Pradesh (155.8), Uttar Pradesh (144.8), Tamil Nadu (111.6), Maharashtra (48.5), Karnataka (38.2), Madhya Pradesh (38.1), Uttarakhand (30.2), Rajasthan (25.5), West Bengal (21.1) and Gujarat (18.9).
- The contribution of top 10 States was about 85.5% to the total number of domestic tourist visits during 2010. The percentage shares of top 5 States were Andhra Pradesh (21%), Uttar Pradesh (19.6%), Tamil Nadu (15.1%), Maharashtra (6.5%) and Karnataka (5.2%)

(b) Foreign Tourist visits to States/ UTs

- During 2010, the number of foreign tourist visits (FTVs) to the States/ UTs was 17.9 million as compared to 14.4 million in 2009 and 2008.
- During 2010, the number of FTVs to States/UTs registered an impressive growth of 24.2% over 2009 as compared to a decline of 0.1% in 2009 over 2008.
- The top ten States in terms of number of FTVs (in millions) during 2010 were Maharashtra (5.1), Tamil Nadu (2.8), Delhi (1.9), Uttar Pradesh (1.7), Rajasthan (1.3), West Bengal (1.2), Kerala (0.66), Bihar (0.64), Himachal Pradesh (0.45) and Goa (0.44).
- The contribution of top 10 States was about 90.3% to the total number of FTVs in the country during 2010. The percentage shares of top 5 States were Maharashtra (28.5%), Tamil Nadu (15.7%), Delhi (10.6%), Uttar Pradesh (9.4%) and Rajasthan (7.2%)

Data shows that after a slight decline in 2009, the foreign tourist visits registered an impressive growth of 24.2% in 2010. The domestic tourist visits continue to grow at a double digit

rate in 2010 also.

Domestic Tourism in Rajasthan - SWOT Analysis:

Rajasthan is one of the most important tourist destinations in India and south-east Asia. Its desert dotted with rugged forts and beautiful palaces, lakes, wildlife and bird sanctuaries, charming cities, fairs and festivals and colorful culture form the most fascinating and unique basket of attractions for any tourist.

Table: Domestic Tourism in Rajasthan

Year	Domestic Tourists	Change in Tourists Traffic (In Percentage)
2001	7757217	5.19
2002	8300190	6.99
2003	12545135	51.14
2004	16033896	27.81
2005	18787298	17.17
2006	23483287	25.00
2007	25920529	10.38
2008	28358918	9.41
2009	25558691	-9.87
2010	25543877	-0.06

Source: Department of Tourism, Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur.

As far as Rajasthan is considered vast potential and resources are there but the need to pay heed is required. Rajasthan's rich culture, history and heritage have always been a centre of attraction to all masses, not only for the international tourists but the domestic tourists as well. Along with international tourists the need of an hour is to look at our own people, experience the share of our rich cultures and mingle inter-state in all spheres thus multiplying our income and integrity on whole.

Rajasthan has been recognized as a destination to offer all the dreams comes true for everyone but has emphasized more on international tourists. Why do we neglect this major sector when we can really generate the source from them? What message do we give to them when they visit us or do they really carry a lifetime experience and desire to come back? There are lot many questions to ask and who is accountable to answer.

Domestic tourism is accorded as the base for international tourism and has bigger share and more potential than international tourism in terms of volume and receipts but being the neglected sector has remained disorganized.

A review of the sector's competitive strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats indicates that it has considerable growth potential. A separate SWOT analysis after examining the available resources could prove beneficial and is necessary to chalk out the target market groups, their strengths, weakness, threats & opportunities. It helps in designing marketing strategies to promote tourism.

Strengths

- Domestic tourism has the potential to increase the productivity of Rajasthan's natural, human, cultural and technical resources.
- It is labor intensive industry, providing employment and contributing in better quality of life.
- It is capable of being primarily focused on rural areas with appropriate and relatively low cost programs.
- Domestic tourism has extensive forward and backward economic linkages that build overall income, employment, investment and raise central, state, local government revenues.
- Tourism on the whole has the ability to promote understanding, peace, and contribute to national unity and regional stability.

The rich natural and rural landscape of Rajasthan is punctuated with the built heritage of its ancient past and more modern structures of present and its hopes for the future. Rajasthan's grandeur is reflected in the rich cultural diversity of its people through its languages, cuisines, traditions, customs, music, dance, religious practices and festival, its holistic healing traditions, art and craft.

Weaknesses

One of the major drawbacks is the low priority given by the government which reflects in the limited budgets, limited cooperation and coordination capabilities and the inability to implement strategic initiatives and projects.

The other main constraints are undue importance on international market at the expense of domestic tourism, the security scenario which affects the perception of Rajasthan as safe, the quality of facilities and services at attractions, the quantity and quality of transportation services, the related infrastructure, limited availability of tourist information in source markets and at destination, insufficient marketing, and limited and poor facilities and services outside the major cities, especially in rural areas.

Opportunities

- The major opportunities are leverage the huge potential of India's domestic urban population to develop pilgrim tourism, rural tourism, cultural tourism and heritage tourism.
- Leverage its strength as major cities are enlisted in the list of heritage cities of UNESCO and its rich and diverse natural heritage can increase its share in the huge domestic market.
- Leverage its strength as one of the fast growing state of India in terms of tourism, investment, technology and entertainment.
- Leverage its strength by welcoming investors with its friendly and liberal investment policy.

Threats

The main internal threats to the development domestic tourism sector are failing to effectively resolve the constraints mentioned in the weaknesses. They are security, safety, health and sanitation; failing to involve communities in the decision making process for the development of tourism; failure to adopt and implement sustainable development and management practices at the sites, especially in the rural and natural areas of the country.

From an external point of view, the main threats are not effectively approaching the fierce and ever-increasing competition from competing states like Kerala, Uttranchal etc., over-reliance on a few well known international and domestic travel markets like Gujarat and Bengal.

For tourism destination planning, the following are probably some of the important factors which may foster development.

- The availability of natural resources & attractions.
- The availability of investment funds.
- A skilled human resource base
- Government policy
- The economic, socio cultural and environmental effects of planned tourism activity.
- Local population opinion
- The degree to which an entrepreneurial climate exists.
- Destination accessibility.
- The presence of complementary services and facilities such as infrastructure and superstructure.

Rajasthan possesses a rich and diverse range of unique tangible and intangible cultural, natural and man-made tourism resources, many of which are world class in quality, and most of which are located in rural areas. The tourism resources of the state have the potential to attract significantly higher levels of markets demand from the domestic and international markets provided that sustainable site management practices and principles are adopted and applied, and the other constraints identified above are effectively resolved. Provided that the identified constraints and opportunities are addressed and appropriate plans prepared to handle the internal and external threats, then it is considered that Rajasthan Tourism focus should be to: Substantially increase the proportion of the urban resident leisure and pilgrimage tourism to rural areas not just in terms of volume but also in terms of length of stay and expenditure.

Conclusion & Suggestions:

There is a need for a framework to be evolved which is Government-led, private sector driven and community-welfare oriented. Government will have to provide a legislative framework to regulate tourism trade and industry, ensure

safety and security of the tourists and create basic infrastructure and health care facilities. The private sector has to act as a main spring of the activities and impart dynamism and speed to the process of development as well as conservation. Both governments and the private sector would be required to safeguard the stability and also the social and economic advancement of the local communities. Moreover, effective linkages and close coordination should be established with such departments as Civil Aviation, Environment, Forest, Railways and Home etc.

As we can conclude that, although tourism is a fickle industry, subjects to consumer whims and forces beyond the industry's control, it is also a dynamic and exciting industry. The benefits are easily replicated by any other types of product or service. It is ripe time to start thinking and implementing the piece-meal strategies to tap the enormous potential of domestic travelers. A good start would be to give Domestic Tourism Sector its due importance in the State Budgets and Revenue Generating Industries. This will certainly give much needed fillip to propel the traffic towards our colorful State.

Major Suggestions of this article are given as follows:

- Declaration of tourism as a priority sector in the state development plans.
- Successful tourism development depends not only on the hotels and travel agencies but on the provision of adequate infrastructure including transport and communication, power, water and good standards of hygiene and medical facilities.
- Appropriate infrastructure like transport, accommodation should meet the demands of tourists as they generally feel that they are the neglecting sector in comparison to international tourists.
- Advertising and what is lacking in terms of domestic tourism products is the availability of "interest – oriented packages" similar to those which are developed for the overseas visitor.
- The Qualmark system of quality grading and systems for tourism products of NZ should be introduced in Rajasthan as Qualmark is vested with the responsibility for developing and implementing a single, integrated, industry wide quality standards and accreditation system in order to ensure that quality underpins the visitor experience across all tourism products and services.
- Involving consultants with wide knowledge and having ample of resources in preparing policies and strategies for the future tourism.
- The government should administer law and order, should have vigilant tourism police, rectification of complaints on time, frame rules and regulations for tourism industry.
- Steps should be taken to avoid any harassment by private operators and touts.
- Facilities consisting of good communication and transport connections to nearest rail, road, and air heads.
- The government should widely advertise tourism through media like Television, Print, and Internet. Sufficient literature should be distributed to important Travel Agents and Tour Operators, Air-lines, and Hotel groups for distribution.
- Special efforts should be made to publish tourism literature in the regional languages and especially to those tourist generating areas from where we receive the most.
- Brochure, mouth publicity, email, websites, newspapers, all types of electronic and print media are the modes of communication to reach all centers of tourists so they should be updated and presented in the manner which highlights the attractions of the destination and the state on the whole.
- To strengthen domestic tourism, one of the important aspects is to listen and rectify the problems of domestic tourists which are virtually neglected.
- Domestic tourism is not only a revenue generating sector, but also act as a tool for conservation of historical sites and monuments which helps in promoting international tourism by the means of mouth publicity from the outbound tourists of India.
- Travel agencies and Hoteliers should take steps to develop confidence in host community to have friendly relationships with tourists.
- The itinerary of tourist should be enriched with right kind of information about domestic places and the amenities available or offered to him.
- As a souvenir efforts should be made to market the 'Heritage Liquors' of Rajasthan with the partnership of private sector as per the provisions of state excise policy and other handicrafts which reflect the image of the destination.
- Quality of food, beverages should meet the demands, and the cuisine of Rajasthan should be promoted in the form of food-marts and especially during fairs and festivals which give access to a huge number of tourists at the same time.
- Food availability at eleventh hour at food joints for the late arrivals in all the major tourist cities of Rajasthan should be administered.
- General Hygiene and cleanliness is to be maintained at the low budgetary hotels also as cleanliness is next to god, and it will help in inculcating divine atmosphere for domestic tourists.
- Finally it must be assured that the policies outlined from time to time are not ship wrecked in the sea of half hearted

implementations.

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