ABSTRACT

The tourism industry in India is known to be a major contributor of inclusive growth in India. This industry has grown significantly in the recent past and possesses immense potential to become an attractive yet economical tourist destination. This paper primarily focuses on tourism in the state of Maharashtra – one of the most visited states by foreign tourists and highlights various initiatives taken by the government for promoting tourism.

Keywords: Tourism Development; Government Initiatives; Inclusive Growth

INTRODUCTION

Tourism denotes travel for any purpose like leisure, recreation, business or any other purpose. The economy of a country can be transformed through tourism. Maharashtra is one of the most visited states by foreign tourists; as its name suggests, ‘Mah’ which means ‘great’ and ‘Rashtra’ which means ‘nation’. It is known for its scenic hill stations, places of pilgrimage, adventure sport, beaches, educational institutes and countryside of the Konkan region. Many of the destinations in Maharashtra attract tourists from all over the world. The reasons for tourist attractions are varied; be it recreation, education, adventure or medical facilities. Commutation to any place in this state is convenient; thanks to easy accessibility and connection of railways, roadways, waterways.

Tourism is known to be a major contributor to inclusive growth. According to K.C Chakrabarty, Deputy Governor R.B.I, inclusive growth allows people to ‘contribute to and benefit from economic growth’. The concept of inclusive growth results in poverty reduction through creation of employment opportunities across all segments of society. It includes the excluded agents whose participation is essential in the development process and not just welfare targets of developmental programmes. (Planning Commission, 2007).

Inclusive growth= equal opportunities + equal access to people (Governor of R.B.I, Mr. Raghuram Rajan)

According to World Trade Organisation, tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their rural environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes.
The Ministry of Tourism has a significant contribution for inclusive growth and employment; thus reducing poverty. Migrant workers and the youth are benefitted with opportunities for employment. The G-20 Summit which was held in Mexico in June 2012 underlines the significance of tourism as a vehicle for job creation and economic growth and development. It also supports various travel initiatives to promote creation of jobs, reduction in poverty as well as global growth. By 2016, the Ministry of Tourism has targeted 1495.82 domestic tourists’ visits. Keeping this in mind, various promotional activities have been undertaken.

**Initiatives Taken By the Government for Promotion of Tourism**

**Clean India Campaign:** Cleanliness in any region cannot be ignored and its absence will affect the number of tourists. The Ministry of Tourism has undertaken ‘Campaign Clean India’ with a view to bringing about sensitisation and action to attain hygiene and cleanliness. A workshop for the same was organised in New Delhi to generate constructive suggestions for execution of the campaign. MOUs were signed by the Ministry with fourteen other ministries in order to seek their intervention and recommendations. A lot of publicity through radio, commercials, slogans etc. has been undertaken for successful execution of the campaign. Thirty-six monuments have been identified by ASI (Archaeological Survey of India) for the project. Schools and educational institutions are involved and ‘Shramdan’ is undertaken at the destination. The solid waste management system is also critically analysed and improvements are recommended. This provides educational and employment opportunities for the youth of our country.

**Wine Tourism:** The wine tourism industry is fast emerging. Vineyards visited by tourists are the Himachal region, Sangali, Ahmednagar, Solapur, Pune, Nasik and Bangalore. The export of wine in India is not high. However around eighty percent of wine produced in India is consumed by Indians themselves. A lot if initiatives have been taken by the Indian government in this regard. The Sula vineyards are the most popular in India.

The local farmers can benefit from the wine industry. However, wine in India, if marketed in a better manner highlighting its benefits on health can boost the sale of wine. Integrated programmes and packages where tourists can avail of accommodation and a tour guide through the vineyards etc. would help promote this industry.

**Medical Tourism:** Medical Tourism in India has developed manifold. People from all around the world come here for various treatments because of the cost-advantage. Treatment is affordable compared to their home country. A major surgery like a bypass in India is cheaper than the United States. India offers treatment like Yoga, Ayurveda, Naturotherapy and Rejuvenation therapy – some of the most ancient forms of treatment in the world. Kerala promotes health tourism and has many Ayurvedic centres, hotels and resorts where treatment is offered to tourists at reasonable fares. India’s expense on healthcare is over Rs. 1,00,000 Crore a year (Medical Tourism in India). The progress in this industry opens doors to a huge amount of employment opportunities to approximately over 20 million employees. According to Dr. Ambika Soni, the health tourism industry generates more jobs per unit investment than any other sector.

**Tourism Development in the Konkan Region:** A festival called Global Konkan festival was organised from 14th December to 17th December 2014 In Navi Mumbai which is considered as a gateway to this region. The prime focus was development of the Konkan region. Rs. 60 crore would be allocated to develop model villages for beach tourism according to Sanjay Yadavrao, Chairman, Konkan Bhumi Pratishthan. This would create a lot of employment opportunities for the locals in this region. Tourism in the Konkan region can grow rapidly provided stakeholders from the industry work together. If the state government, tour operators and locals put in substantial and synchronised efforts for infrastructural development and come up with good marketing strategies, tourism in this region can grow rapidly.
Tourism Development for Nasik Region: Some tourist attractions in Nasik include Ramkund, Muktidam temple, Coin museum, Pandavleni caves, Deolali camp etc. However absence of cleanliness amounts to a decline in the rate of tourism in any region; which is a prime concern in the case of Nasik. Lack of adequate facilities and civic amenities near tourist spots needs attention. For this, a proposed tourism plan of Rs. 350 Crore which is five times the funds that Nasik has been sanctioned in the past four years will be allocated to this district according to Mr. Pradeep Potdar, District Planning Officer of Nasik.

Promotion of Gateway of India: The Gateway of India is a must see by tourists who visit Mumbai city. Keeping the objective of providing a complete experience and maintaining this monument as priority, Mr. Krishna Prakash- additional commissioner of police and CEO of N Kumar Associates International, Mr. Nilesh Kumar have proposed complete security in this spot by usage of CCTV cameras and a soft skills (communication, grooming etc.) training programme.

Hunar Se Rozgar Programme:

- To bring down the ‘skill gap’ in the tourism and hospitality industry.
- To ensure that the poor can avail of economic benefit from tourism.

Visa on Arrival (VOA):

- To enhance tourist inflow
- Long term tourist visas for five years.

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Cities in Maharashtra

- Ahmednagar (Shirdi)
- Akola (Cotton City)
- Ali Baug
- Amaravati
- Aurangabad
- Beed
- Bhandara (Brass City)
- Buldhana
- Chikaldara
- Dhule
- Gadchiroli
- Gondia
- Hingoli
- Jalgaon
- Jalna
- Kholapur
- Latur
- Lonaivala / Khandala
- Mahabaleshwar

Significance

- Architectural Monuments
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- Cuisine, Temples & Museums
- Centre for Trade and Commerce
- Hill Stations
- Hill Stations
Cities in Maharashtra | Significance
--- | ---
Mumbai (Capital) | Bollywood, Commercial Capital of India
Nagpur (Orange City) | Trade Centre for Oranges
Nanded | Architectural Monuments, Pilgrimage
Nandurbar | Hill Station
Nasik | Wine Capital of India, Grape City, Pilgrimage
Navi Mumbai | World’s largest planned city, Social and Physical Infrastructure
Osmanabad | Pilgrimage
Panchgani | Hill Station
Parbhani | Pilgrimage
Pune (Cultural Capital of India) | IT Hub & Educational institutes
Raigad | Hill Stations & Temples
Sangli (Turmeric City and Sugar belt of India) | Over 30 sugar factories, Grape growing regions
Satara | Temples, parks, lakes & bird sanctuary
Sindhudurg | Beaches, Temples & historical forts
Solapur | Cotton mills, power looms, Temples, Port and Wildlife Sanctuary
Thane | City of lakes
Wardha | Cotton trade
Washim | Temples
Yavatmal | Oil, Pulses and Saw mills

OBJECTIVES
1. To understand the role of the government in promoting tourism in various parts of Maharashtra.
2. To analyse recent developments of tourism in the state of Maharashtra.
3. To understand the various types of tourism.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
1. Is tourism in the state of Maharashtra declining in the recent past?
2. Does tourism in the state of Maharashtra have potential for employment generation?

METHODOLOGY
This study is exploratory in nature. It is based on secondary data collected from various sources like journals, magazines, websites, newspapers and some informal interactions with employees working in the tourism industry.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION
‘Pro-Poor tourism’ approach adopted by Ministry of Tourism focuses on majorly reducing poverty in India. Nearly more than half of the tourism ministry’s budget plan aims at projects for rural tourism.
Tourism in the state of Maharashtra has immense potential for employment generation and earning a large amount of foreign exchange. Maharashtra’s rich natural and cultural environment needs to be preserved and developed in a way that tourists are drawn repeatedly to this state.

Terror attacks as well as increase in crime rates against foreign tourists in the recent past have affected the number of tourists visiting the state. For this, safety and security measures should be paid due attention to and must be boosted to monitor and control terror attacks.

The synergised efforts between the State and the Central Government along with N.G.Os and the private sector can go a long way in the development of the tourism industry.

The Indian Ministry of Tourism’s campaign ‘Atithi Devo Bhava’ which means ‘Guest is God’, if given utmost regard by every Indian citizen will go a long way.

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