

A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN HARYANA

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Abstracts

The paper is a modest effort to investigate the challenges of tourism development in Haryana .A detailed discussion on scarcities of natural resources with critical analyzes of existing tourism activities have been presented in order to strengthen the input for effective future planning . The paper recommends Public Private Partnership (PPP model), commissioning of institutes for manpower supply, celebration of more events like Surajkund craft festival, Gita jayanti festival and infrastructure development.

Keywords: Haryana tourism, Events, Infrastructure, Literature, Public Private Partnership

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Introduction

At the time of inception on 1st November 1966, Haryana was perceived as a state without potential for tourism industry. The nature has not blessed the state with natural resources and conducive environmental conditions. No high and snow-capped mountains, no rivers with scope of adventure activities and no exotic place which can be developed as core attraction are absent from resource base of Haryana. Today, in term of attraction creation, the state has played role of leader in starting of Highway tourism and event based tourism like Surajkund Craft fair. The state attracted 59.881 lakhs domestic tourists and 1.34 lakhs international tourists in year 2010-2011 (Data, Haryana Tourism Corporation, 2012).

Role of Government

At initial stage, bottleneck of infrastructure was an obstacle but with public private partnership, we have solved this problem. Our government has received huge investments from this PPP model. Our policy' focus is to create quality infrastructure in the state. Tourism policy clearly indicates that the state does not have very much to offer as far as climatic conditions and natural resources are concerned, thus tourism would be promoted with strategy to focus on culture, heritage, religious, rural area and highway. The state will play role of facilitator for provisions of tourist information centers, organizing craft fairs, transportation services and wayside amenities. Emphasis will be on quality development of four 'A's of tourism i.e. Access, Accommodation, Attraction and Amenities.

The innovative policy makers has already identified state's strategic location at route of major destinations of Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh and accordingly established tourist amenities at all relevant transit places. Likewise, due consideration has been given to develop destinations situated in proximity to already developed attractions viz. Damdama (close to Delhi), Pinjore (close to Chandigarh), Sohna, SurajKund. State's achievement in term of **created destinations** and **created events**, too, has been appreciated in country. The successfully organized Surajkund craft fair in term of tourist traffic is significant. Further the state has each and every effort to exploit the available tourism potential. Introduction of trekking and rock climbing in the Morni Hills, water sports at HathniKund and planning to start aero-sports are some of evidences of long term vision of Haryana tourism.

STATUS OF TOURISM

Haryana is on 16th position in country in term of tourist traffic with 1.304 lakh foreigners. The year 2009 has been a highly successful year with a growth rate 7.3% in domestic tourist and 57.3% in foreign tourist arrivals. But in year 2010 growth

Table No. – 1.1(Domestic and Foreign Tourist Arrival Data)

Year	Tourist Arrival Data		Growth Rate	
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic%	Foreign%
2005	591339	59353	-	-
2006	601992	67854	1.8	14.32
2007	6252945	64711	3.87	-4.32
2008	5973123	87172	-4.47	34.70
2009	6408423	137094	7.3	57.3
2010	6915269	106433	7.9	-22.4

Source: India Tourism Statistic 2010.

rate was negative with a value of -22.4% in international tourists. Details month-wise analysis of 2011 also indicates positive growth rate in domestic as well as international tourism. Above table highlights trends up and down in term of foreign tourist arrivals. The state needs to do more to become a hot spot destination and it can possible through an authentic policy framework.

The potential cultural attractions of state have to be focused for development as these have paramount significance. Kurukshetra is obviously first name in the list. Being India's most sacred place, it has unique relevance from religious, historical and even philosophical point of view. Even after huge investments on maintenance and construction of BrahmSarovar, beautification of Jyotisar, cleanliness and revival of Sannehit and many other projects for infrastructure development, till date Kurukshetra is known for its spiritual importance on solar eclipse. Panipat – the historical venue of three battles that turned political history of the India, is still known for handloom industry, not for historical and heritage tourism. Being located enroots to major tourist destinations, places like Karnal and Ambala, have not achieved the status of destination till date. Other places of their religious, historical and cultural significance and venue of fairs and festivals like Pehowa, PanduPindara, KapalMochan, LakhanMajra, Dhosi ,Tirth,

Kalayat, Agroha, Jind, and Bhiwani etc. can be promoted. Out of these, a number of places are already celebrating religious fairs and others can be promoted in a way to attract both domestic and international tourists.

Apart that, richness of folk dance, music, songs and folk-theater, which is at the verge of vanish, can be protected with the help of strategically promoted tourism. Our historical monuments also have strong pull forces but we are not performing well in this context. With integrated tourism planning performance can be improved by promotion of historical and religious sites. The souvenir industry is also non-existent in Haryana which has an important role in development of destination. However, the main area that requires immediate attention is strategic and integrated development of different destinations falling under the category of satellite sites and tourist circuits and this approach may be helpful in improvement of touristic attractiveness. Creation of social awareness in the community towards tourism and its benefits is another important area which can be focused by tourism policy makers.

Discussion

Conclusively it can be derived that state has adequate base of tourism resources which can be transformed into popular destination for both international and domestic tourism. Analysis of literature reveals that there is urgent need to conduct an extensive survey of the resources of Haryana. The information collected should be thoroughly analyzed and mapped so as to detect the potential at both micro and macro levels. These extensive surveys covering both domestic and foreign tourist should be initiated at periodical basis to investigate the changing demands, motivations, expectations-satisfaction levels and main problems faced by tourists. Without compressive information regarding tourists, amenities cannot be created up to the required satisfaction level.

Souvenirs particular to the destinations plays a role of marketing tool. Unfortunately this seems to be missing in the state. Therefore, effective course of actions is required to train and motivate the craftsmen and market souvenirs on relevant themes. If promoted efficiently and effectively this may play significant role in strengthening the state's economy and creating opportunities for employment.

More Events of cultural nature like SurajKund Crafts Mela need to be promoted at other places like Hisar, Kurukshetra, Pinjore, Karnal and Panipat etc. Gita JayantiSamaroh, celebrated at Kurukshetra, is not a very successful even for attracting tourists outside from Haryana. Department of Tourism and Kurukshetra Development Board can market this event at both international and national levels.

Apart marketing strategies, there is a dearth of information about various destinations. Comprehensive uses of electronic media need to be considered on primary basis. To improve the appeal of potential destinations, settings of museums at city level and light and sound shows can be started. Yoga and meditation are emerging as contemporary forms of tourism. Nearby places like Brindavan, Hardwar and Rishikesh etc. have become popular among tourists. The promotion of these activities can take place at SurajKund, Mansa Devi, Kurukshetra, Jyotisar, Pinjore and Sohna.

The contribution of HTC in infrastructural development, there is a need to motivate private sector at large scale. There is a dearth of quality hotels and restaurants in state. At least facilities of tourist information centers at Bus Stand and Railway Station in all major cities of state are urgent requirement. All important historical landmarks and other have been identified for sake of tourism promotion at Panipat, Kurukshetra and Jyotisar etc but lack of physical evidences at these places is visible. The government action is necessity in this direction.

The commissioning of destination authority or development Board by Departments like Department of Tourism, Public Works Department and Development Boards/ Municipality/ Archaeological Department can support by avoiding the duplication of efforts. Different tour packages which include the itineraries of different places of Haryana can be promoted with involvement of private sector. The community participation by organizing awareness programs will be extra beneficial for state tourism.

Tourism awareness programs for the host population and the training facilities for various sectors of industry also need to be focused on priority basis. Maharishi Dayanand University of Rohtak, Kurukshetra University and Hotel Management/ Food Craft Institutes of Haryana tourism needs strengthening at both designing and delivery level.

A significant area, i.e. service of language interpreters has not attracted the attention of policy makers till date and there is no training provision to train manpower in this regard. The problem should be redressed immediately.

Conclusions

The paper concludes that strategic location of state has ample opportunities to promote tourism industry. The state can market its tourism industry by adopting PPP model, increasing skilled manpower supply and by organizing more events like Surajkund craft fair, Gita Jayanti festival etc. Further, recommendations are for exploration of resources, infrastructure development and encashment of contemporary forms of tourism.

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