Tourism Industry In Maharashtra: An Untapped Area Of India

Abstract:

The soil of India has been always lucky to have witnessed and helped several cultures to develop and cherish. India has been a cradle for various civilizations to mature and develop in various ways. It is a true sense of “Unity in Diversity”. The Indian culture teaches its followers to worship tourist as god as in the words “Atithi Devo Bhava”. In India one of the eminent states that is gaining momentum is Maharashtra It is a state considered to be part of western, central, southern and south-central India. It is the second-most populous state and third-largest state by area in India. The terms Maharashtra, Maharashtri, Marathi, and Maratha may have derived from the Maharashtri Prakrit, and the word Marhatta (later used for the Marathas) is found in the Jain Maharashtri literature. Maharashtra is culturally and historically rich state. Maharashtra is a state in India which also is growing as a tourist destination for various reasons like agro-tourism, rural tourism, education tourism, culinary tourism and Historical tourism. The need of the hour is the state governments’ will power to uplift it by some favorable policies. The tourism industry still is at nascent stage it has to go a long way. With the advent of “Digital India movement” and “Swachh Bharat abhiyan” it may touch new high. The positive aspect of growth of tourism is that it absorbs all kind of labour whether skilled or unskilled. Young India can witness a boost in employment if the right button is hit at the right time.

Keywords

Tourism, Challenges and Skilled labour

Objective

1. To understand the Ancient places renowned in India for tourism
2. To analyse the present significance of tourism in Maharashtra
3. To cogitate the Challenges regarding the tourism in Maharashtra

[Image result for atithi devo bhava]

Introduction

India has remained an epicenter of education in the entire South-Asian region since the ancient period. This had given major boost to education tourism at that point in time. Taxila University, Nalanda University and Vikramshila University were epitome of knowledge and most sought after destinations for not only indigenous scholars, but also foreign travellers for knowledge sharing and learning purposes. Also the historical and cultural tourism of India has been always the talk of the town. In spite of inheriting such glorious and noteworthy past of being a prominent center of educational tourism, today India is striving to project itself as an important educational destination. However, with tremendous growth potential of both tourism and education sector in India, it has a strong scope to become a crucial educational destination for the world in general

and for the neighbouring countries in particular.

Maharashtra is a state in India which also is growing as a tourist destination for various reasons like agro tourism, Rural tourism, education tourism, culinary tourism and Historical tourism (Sula In Nasik, for its vineyard cultivation) Tourism industry in Maharashtra has a great potential for growth, given the availability of basic infrastructure and the variety of tourist ideas/adventures offered by various destinations. Maharashtra has a bright historical and cultural heritage, which has been untapped by the tourism industry and the government agencies. The supportive basic infrastructure availability throughout the state would provide an ideal platform for fresh investments in the development of tourism and in the process of creating many direct and indirect employment opportunities to locals in tourist destinations.

The term education tourism or edu-tourism refers to any “program in which participants travel to a location as a group with the primary purpose of engaging in a learning experience directly related to the location” (Bodger, 1998, p.28)

The favorable factors for India are –

1. India is one of the fastest growing economies of the world.
2. It is emerging as a major sought after tourist destination among the residents of neighbouring countries and across globe.
3. Staying here is inexpensive than many developed countries of the world.
4. There are many good academic institutions in India with all kinds of resources and facilities.
5. It is one of the major suppliers of skilled manpower to the developed nations.

Profile Of Maharashtra

Maharashtra with a geographical area of 3,07,713 Sq. Km is the 3rd largest state in India in terms of area, with a coastal line spreading more than 720 kms and 2nd in terms of population (96.75 million). It occupies a broad portion of the Deccan Plateau. The state has a large untapped tourism potential, with attractive and heart capturing tourist destinations which comprises of beaches, forts, hill stations, heritage and sanctuaries. The famous attractions include Mahabaleshwar, Matheran, Ajanta, Ellora, Elephanta and Murud–Janjira, among others.

Map Of Maharashtra

[image:] [image:]

Source: MDTC

Maharashtra is the second most populous state in the country (96.75 million according to population census 2001). The population density is 314 per sq km. & the literacy rate is 77.27%. Marathi is the main language of the masses and is also the official language

Tourism Resources Of Maharashtra

The industries account for around 20-22% of the gross state domestic product and 3.5% of the

employment in the state. There is non-availability of specific estimates on the employment in the travel and tourism industry. The economic census 1998 showed an employment of 4, 61,000 persons (urban and rural) employed in restaurant and hotels and 3, 87,000 persons working in the transportation industry. There is humongous scope for tourism development in Maharashtra.

It is one of the very few divinely blessed states in India bestowed by nature with a unique combination of hills, plateau, sea beaches, historical forts and caves. It is reported that over 80% of the people of Maharashtra live in villages. Their prime occupation is agriculture. Tourism leads to employment generation as well as the generation of economic activities. It is suggested that visit of each foreign tourist provides employment to one person and 6.5 domestic tourists generate one job. Temples, beaches, heritage and culture richly adorn the cities of Maharashtra. Mumbai is a vital and vibrant arrival point for overseas visitors.

Types Of Tourism Attractions In Maharashtra

- Eco Tourism - it refers to exploring the natural resources of a place like Rivers, forest areas and hills, boating in natural areas, nature trails, and educational camps. It is responsible tourism in a sense
- Beach Tourism - there are n numbers of water sports like that attract the all age groups' tourists scuba diving, snorkeling, Marine Park, sea based water sports
- Adventure Tourism - Today tourism is associated with fun element so to get such experiences tourists to go for Safaris, trekking, hiking, mountain climbing, river rafting, water surfing, parasailing, sailing/ yachting, motor boating, water skiing, fun-rides
- Village Tourism - Cultural understanding, experience the tribal/rural way of life, local food products and traditional cuisine local folk dance and music
- Leisure Tourism - Spot based entertainment facilities, tourist wants to get respite from hectic work life.
- Culture & Heritage Tourism - Maharashtra's rich history fives it edge over exploring its heritage, monuments, museums, fairs and festivals, handicrafts and archaeological sites
- Corporate Tourism - Intra Company brainstorming, corporate planning, marketing, training, dealer interaction and special project work
- Medical tourism- Especially Mumbai develops as an advanced medical hub for tourists to get inexpensive medical treatment from specialized doctors

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation

Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC) has been formed under the Companies Act, 1956, for systematic development of tourism on commercial lines, with an authorized share capital of Rs.2500.00 lakhs. The paid up share capital of the Corporation as on 31st March 2001 is Rs. 1462.38 lakhs. The Corporation receives from the State Government financial assistance in the form of share capital contribution. The State Government has assigned all commercial and promotional tourism activities to this Corporation. The Corporation gets financial aid from the state government in the form of share capital and periodical financial contribution. The state government has entrusted all commercial and promotional tourism activities to this corporation. MTDC supplements its resources through institutional finance. Government gives grant in aid to the Directorate of tourism. Eco tourism drives and initiatives are being planned. In an effort to tap the tourism potential, Government of India had spotted certain thrust areas, restoration and balanced development of National Heritage projects of

cultural, historical and tourist importance. Attracting tourists both domestic as well as International and development of selected tourist sports popular with the tourists

Hurdles in the path of tourism to develop in Maharashtra

1. Policy paralysis- there has been no noteworthy policy framed off late also poor co-ordination among the different agencies—Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC), Mumbai Port Trust (MPT), State Maritime Board (SMB), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), etc.
2. More importance to develop industry: Maharashtra has got a status as a self-sustained industrialised state that is why it never focused on the tourism sector. It is only in the last few years that the tourism department has realised the state's potential but it has not made any commendable effort so far to uplift the tourism industry in Maharashtra
3. Less fund allocation: The poor performance of the department can be attributed to the paltry amount allocated to it for promoting its activities. As per the data available with MTDC, it barely received Rs 15 crore a year till the last few years; the amount went up to Rs 25 crore in 2012, and was hiked further to Rs 50 crore later, but was again reduced to Rs 40 crore.
4. Red tapism and “under the table” culture: another reason hindering the growth of the industry is corruption. The newspaper DNA has carried a series of reports highlighting the issue. There have been 23 meetings taken by state tourism corporation official to decide on how to light up the iconic Gateway of India by a private company. It somewhere dampens the spirit of initiative takers.
5. Moreover, the state does not have a 'tourism bhavan' like in other states, from where the department can conducts its operations. 'Many states and even countries like Japan have approached us seeking space to house their tourism offices. But the problem is we ourselves don't have space for constructing a 'tourism bhavan',

Conclusion:

Tourism industry gets step motherly treatment because of lethargy from the government’s side. The fund allocation to specifically this industry must be raised as without infusion of fund it will not grow as per the expectation of the foreign tourists specially those who come from the developed world. Poor connectivity, bad upkeep of hotels and slow growth of aviation sector are some of the roadblocks of today. To keep pace with other countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand and Singapore, India will have to work on Infrastructural bottlenecks. Even China has gone far in the tourism industry India is a still taking baby steps. We should not get awakened in the stage when the competition gets cut throat.

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