

**CHHATTISGARH TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES****Dr. Kaushtubh Jain***, Prem Shankar Dwivedi

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.425491**KEYWORDS:** Tourism, Services, Emerging trends, Opportunities, Marketing.**ABSTRACT**

Tourism is a growing service industry which contributes a substantial amount in many parts of the world. In India, Chhattisgarh is one of the important destinations for the national and international tourists with its unique and enchanting land abounding in scenic beauty, rich in flora and fauna. To make the tourism a great success one has to take advantage of the modern technology to full extent. Many countries are promoting tourism and it has become a source of major income for countries like India, Singapore and Malaysia. Tourism is, of course, big industry in most developed countries like the US, the UK, France and Switzerland. Tourism industry is one in which there is high competition. The price of the tourist package is the main criteria for people in India to consider making a trip. Tourists can be divided based on their socio-economic status, geographic differences, demographics and psychographics. The marketing mix elements of tourism industry help in creating an image of the tourist destination, building awareness of the services.

This paper discusses opportunities and challenges of tourism industry of the state of Chhattisgarh.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism in recent times has shown phenomenal growth. This has emerged as flourishing industry with bright prospects. Tourism has indeed been a rapidly growing sector and wide-sweeping socio-economic phenomenon with broad economic, social, cultural and environment consequences. It is likely that tourism will continue to dominate the international scene for many years to come. In the eyes of many decision and policy makers tourism has magic potential. It generates income and is based on the indigenous resources of the tourist areas concerned. Tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the global economy, which account for about 11 percent of the Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and employ about 200 million people worldwide. There are about 700 million international travelers per year. Tourism and travel related sectors have become dynamic sources of income and a major strategic sector for development in many countries. Tourism businesses operate globally and many have opted for a competitive advantage of internationalization. Technology, information and reduction of boundaries have created new forms of service companies, not only the large multinational corporations, but also small niche specialists. The growing importance of strategic alliances in creating networks of business relationships has become a trend also in tourism.

Tourism has become one of the most crucial sectors in a large number of emerging countries. Moreover, the tourism industry in such markets is forecasted to keep increasing in the next decade. Hence, understanding and accurately forecast tourism trends in the industry are essential in order to manage this sector effectively. In the following paper it is discussed about the emerging opportunities in tourism with special reference to Chhattisgarh tourism marketing.

TOURISM MARKETING

Travel and tourism have been considered as an important industry in the service sector. The service sector consists of various kinds of industries such as financial services, health care services, and information sector services. Among these industries, tourism is one of the most important indicators of economic contributions for both developed and developing countries. An economic impact of tourism is significant, since huge amount of foreign inflow come from tourism. Moreover, tourism accounts for the major source of cash incomes, and it has been regarded as a major source of economic growth and employment creation.



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Tourism is today emerging as a leading sector in the world and is now considered by some as the number one industry. International tourism in emerging & developing markets has grown at an average rate of 6-8% over the past decade. Demographic, socio-structural and socio-cultural developments have always led to changes in tourist demands, and service providers in tourism are faced with a substantial need to adjust. These constant challenges have expanded and intensified considerably in the first few years of the new millennium. War and tourism, extreme weather, the ongoing internationalization of tourism and the ageing of society (increasingly prominent in public awareness) have emphatically demonstrated the latent vulnerability of tourism as a boom industry. Development of tourism is a very complex process of interaction among many players, who have the shared responsibility concerning the environmental, social and economic sustainability of this lucrative sector. This process involves the tourism industry, which promotes a sustainable product; the consumer who develops the sustainable consumption trends; and the public authorities who strive to create the right framework so as to enable the sustainable use of the resources and the creation of a commercial level-playing field among all the different stakeholders. On top of that, tourism in emerging markets is a major source of economic growth and foreign income. For these markets, the expected economic improvement relied heavily on the amount of tourism inflow.

The tourism industry in emerging markets is forecasted to keep increasing in the next decade. For example, the tourism industry in China and India are growing rapidly, leading to a significant increase in both business and leisure travel. In particular, China will jump from fourth to second position above Japan and Germany and is forecasted to increase its travel and tourism demand four times up by 2018, accounting for US\$2,465 billion, with an annual growth rate of 8.9%. The projection of the increasing trend for tourism in emerging markets is presented in table 1. However, the tourism industry has been affected by the ongoing global economic crisis. The World Travel and Tourism Council revealed the results of its Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report (2009), explaining that the tourism trends will face a more challenging time than ever before due to the impact from an economic uncertainty. The report also predicts a downturn of international tourism particularly in emerging markets. Although the tourism industry in emerging market will face a new challenge, it is believed that the trend will be positive in the long-run if properly managed.

Thus, understanding and accurately forecast demand in the industry is essential in order to proactively survive during this tough time and effectively manage the industry over time. It is the intention of this study to develop a useful framework for estimating demand for tourism in emerging markets.

CHHATTISGARH TOURISM

About the State

On 1st November 2000, the Chhattisgarh state was formed by carving out 16 Chhattisgarhi speaking south-eastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Today the state has 27 districts and its capital is Raipur. This new state has large stretches of forest and greenery. In fact in a way the division of Madhya Pradesh has worked to the advantage of Chhattisgarh as the area under this state is blessed with huge natural resources.

With the formation of the new state, tourism potential of the state can be exploited to the hilt. 'Beauty' as is popularly said is in the beholders eye", and is largely perceived and suggestive. One of the world's most famous waterfalls is Niagara Falls and it is only around 175 feet high. Compare this with world's highest cascade; Venezuela's Angel falls at 3200 feet or even our own Indian one, The Jog falls of Karnataka at 830 feet. This is what marketing does. And this is what the state needs to do – aggressive marketing.

Tourism Potential of the state

The state has a tremendous potential for tourism. Its tourism strength lies in several areas such as Eco-tourism, Pilgrim tourism, Business tourism, Culture and ethno-tourism, Culture heritage and village tourism etc. Chhattisgarh has three national parks and 11 wildlife sanctuaries which can be positioned as national and international tourist destination. This forest area is full of greenery and beauty of nature which can be a boon to the people who want to relax and get away from their tension.

There are places of religious importance which can be developed as pilgrim tourism. Places like Rajim, Champaranya, Dongargarh, Shivrinarayan, Girodhpuri, Dantewada, Ratanpur, Sirpur and others are popular and



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main destination for pilgrim tourism. This state shares its historical background with the religious faith of Ramayan period. Places like Balmiki Ashram, shivrinarayan and many other are still there with a lot of potential. Manpat which is in the northern part of the state is also a very promising tourist destination which is one of the most beautiful tourist spot. Apart from this Dussehra of Jagdalpur(southern part of Chhattisgarh) is also very important festival which is already very popular but still has a lot more to do to popularize it in a better way. Tribal culture and villages of the state can also be the part of tourist attractions if explored in a way that makes people to feel different. It can make people to relax and show them the beauty and simplicity of the tribal's culture of Chhattisgarh. Today there is cut-throat competition in the market. Life is very busy and hectic in such a chaos and disturbance of urban part of our country if people get an environment which is away from all these and which lives as the creation of nature.

The state thus has the potential to attract tourists of every hue and color. The only requirement is to market its tourism potential aggressively. An analysis of the tourism potential of the state is carried out in the ongoing lines to present a clear picture.

Chhattisgarh's Rich Heritage

Chhattisgarh has the potential to become a very popular tourism destination given the various tourist attractions it can offer. In fact there is something for every kind of tourism in the state – right from pilgrimage to eco-tourism. Chhattisgarh has places which are famous pilgrimage sites. Its tourism strength lies in several areas such as Eco-tourism, Pilgrim tourism, Business tourism, Culture and ethno-tourism, Culture heritage and village tourism etc.

Eco-tourism: This state is fortunate to have 12% share of India's forests, three national parks and 11 wildlife sanctuaries. The national parks are the major attraction of Chhattisgarh. It has several modern attractions in protected areas such as Kanger Valley national parks, Barnwaparan, Seetanadi, Udyanti and Achanakmar sanctuaries which has now become home for the wild buffalos and even more endangered Hill Myna are the state animal and state bird respectively.

Pilgrim tourism: The state encourages development of pilgrimage centers. Rajim, Champaranya, Dongargarh, Shivrinarayan, Girodhpuri, Dantewada, Ratanpur, Sirpur and others are popular and main destination for pilgrim tourism.

Business tourism and Travel Tourism: Chhattisgarh encourages investments in establishment of business -cum-recreation centers to cater to the needs of business tourists with higher purchasing power, facilities, such as hotels, entertainment and amusement parks, multiplexes, health, spas, shopping malls and Golf courses are being encouraged.

Culture and ethno-tourism: Chhattisgarh is very rich in its culture, traditions and festivals. Now it has identified and is developing ethnic villages and private sector is encouraged for proper maintenance and professional site management of important heritage site / monuments.

Culture heritage and village tourism: state will identify and develop heritage properties i.e. old palaces, Havellies etc. as places of tourist interest. These will be integrated with the eco – tourism circuits. Boramdeo, Rajim, Sirpur, Tala, Malhar, Shivrinarayan, Rock paintings of Raigarh, Ramgarh, Tumhan, Barsur and Kharod will be promoted as prime heritage sites. Festivals like Dusshera of Bastar, Madai of Narayanpur and Dantewada, Ramoram mela of Sukama, Boramdeo, Khairagarh and Chkradhar samaroh of Raigarh will also be promoted.

Tourism in Chhattisgarh

Tourism in Chhattisgarh can be a major source of revenue and economic sustenance for not only the country but various states too. Particularly the ones that enjoy bounty of the nature, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have already done it. States like West Bengal are aiming at it.

Given the number of beautiful tourist spots that the state has, if the Chhattisgarh government takes proper steps tourism can be developed into a major revenue earner for the state's kitty, creating income generation opportunities in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.



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It may be pointed out that in a very short duration after the formation of the state, the government of Chhattisgarh analyzed the potential for developing the state and took some concrete steps to promote and develop tourism in the state. It had announced a forward- looking tourism policy, which clearly recognizes the strengths and weaknesses and potential of tourism in the state. This tourism policy is not only a policy statement but is an attempt to analyze the tourism potential and strengths of Chhattisgarh along with the weakness and challenges.

The strengths and assets of Chhattisgarh clearly are pilgrimage, cultural tourism, heritage, eco-tourism, adventure tourism and wellness.

The challenges are the augmentation of infrastructure facilities with particular focus on improving air, rail and road connectivity and development of new tourist destinations, enhanced private sector participation, an aggressive and well planned publicity and marketing strategy , a more action oriented tourism administration and management, year round tourism and the more active participation of local host communities.

In order to ensure planned development and growth a master plan approach needs to be adopted. Though the state government initiates several steps to improve the air, rail and road connectivity a lot still needs to be done. Air connectivity of the state is poor and Raipur is the only city having an airport that connects to some states and cities of the countries.

SOME MAJOR CHALLENGES WHICH CAN BE CONVERTED INTO OPPORTUNITIES

So, what are the hurdles that need to be done to be overcome for promoting tourism in Chhattisgarh? First of all tourism in Chhattisgarh has not yet received the focus of a state activity. Tourism development In Chhattisgarh is also affected by the fact that awareness and sensitivity about the potential of tourism has not percolated to all sections of the society. Following ground realities should be kept in mind about the state-

- Inadequate and poor quality of infrastructure,
- Carrying capacity by air, road, and railways,
- Clean and comfortable lodging facilities at reasonable prices,
- Trained guides and tourist amenities of international standard,
- Adequate entry points,
- Positive image building abroad,
- The need to preserve the heritage and natural resources,
- Safe and secure tourism.

Now keeping these ground realities in mind, what should be the action plan for Chhattisgarh? The future action programme should revolve around creating adequate infrastructure of international standard to make arrivals easy and a pleasurable experience.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Proper development of infrastructure, tourist facilities, enhancement of communication networks etc.
2. All the information, instructions, suggestions should be made available in Braille and large print. Large print material should be placed at eye level.
3. All travel and tourism organisations should be advised to document the Factsheets on access enabling facilities in their premises and publicise them.
4. Tourism communication strategy should be such that accessible tourism information would be integral to all campaigns.
5. Realise and respect the value of environment, flora and fauna, monuments and cultural heritage.
6. Practice conservation of nature and culture as a way of life.
7. Research should be undertaken throughout all stages of tourism development and operation to monitor impacts, to solve problems and to allow local people and others to respond to changes and to take advantages of opportunities.
8. Infrastructure facilities should improve in all tourist destinations of the state as priority importance.

**CONCLUSION**

The main objective for developing various types of tourism in Chhattisgarh is to promote our rich cultural heritage and environment. This, in turn, enhances eco-tourism for sustainable livelihoods. The strategies involved for sustainability of state tourism projects should also include aggressive Marketing Strategies. There is demand of rural tourism in India as modern day tourist is keen to explore and experience the cultural heritage of the destination. India being a destination with rich cultural diversity always attracts tourists; particularly the tourists who cherish the local beauty.

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