

Destination Tourism Rajasthan: Exploring the Multidimensional Aspects for Future Development

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Abstract

Tourism is emerging as a dominant powerhouse in the Indian economic scenario. It has an immense potential for creating employment, foreign exchange and sustainable human development. Rajasthan is among the top ten tourist destinations in India. This paper examines the trends of foreign tourists' arrival in Rajasthan and its percentage share in Indian tourism on the basis of data collected from various reports and government officials of Rajasthan. Paper further focuses on the various problems faced by tourism industry in Rajasthan. Lastly it suggests measures to make Rajasthan the number one tourist destination in India. It is identified that it depends upon several factors such as better infrastructure, economic accommodation, effective utilization of funds and safe environment. Besides the essential requirements, integrity and a sense of belonging on the part of officials and locals in the field of tourism are also essential factors.

Keywords: Tourism; Emerging Regions; Tourism Development; World Heritage Sites

Introduction

Tourism is the fastest growing industry in the modern world. The World Tourism Organization (1995, p. 14) defines tourists as people who 'travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited.' Hunziker and Krapf defined tourism as 'being a sum of relations and phenomena resulting from travel and stay of non-residents, in so far a stay does not lead to permanent residence and is not connected with any permanent or temporary earning activity' (as cited in Azizi, 2011). This definition was subsequently adopted by the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (IASET).

Rajasthan is one of India's major tourist destinations, with international visitors generally making a circuit of its spectacular Rajput and Mughal cities, forts and palaces such as Jodhpur, Jaipur and the Lake Palace at Udaipur (Shackley, 1996). The majority of tourists that visit Rajasthan come from the United Kingdom, France, the United States of America, Germany, Italy and Australia

(Annual Progress Report 2014-2018). Rajasthan carries a diverse cultural heritage and rich historical sense which, when added along with numerous other tourist attractions, attract domestic and foreign tourists both. Jaipur and Udaipur are among the top ten most popular tourist destinations in India. The state exhibits a unique mix of products, as 'The Golden Triangle' i.e. the Delhi-Jaipur-Agra circuit i.e. the route between Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, when plotted on the map form an equilateral triangle. It offers extraordinary religious and historical sights to the tourists; the luxury tourist trains 'Palace on Wheels' (one among the top ten luxurious train journeys in the world) and Royal Rajasthan of Wheels covers 'The golden Triangle' and 'The Desert Triangle' of tourism. This desert triangle is the hub of renowned heritage hotels, pastoral fairs and festivals. The state of Rajasthan has a unique feature that is the Thar Desert, which provides an experience of camel rides, overnight camping in the middle of nowhere, dune bashing, parasailing over the desert, sunset and sunrise over the sand dunes, folk and cultural performance etc. that cannot be facilitated in other parts of India.

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Foreign tourists visit the state to experience its famous culture and customs and while doing so, get immersed in learning the local cultural elements like the language, folk dances, local musical instruments, etc. Rajasthan is home to various pilgrimage centers of utmost importance to various religious sects like Jainism, Islam and Hinduism which attract tourists and religious followers combined to places like Mount-Abu, Delwara, Ranakpur, Ramderoa, Deshnok, Pushkar, Ajmer and Nathdwara. Rajasthan owns three famous wildlife sanctuaries namely, Ghana bird sanctuary, Ranthambore tiger reserve and Sariska Tiger reserve which attract foreign tourists. Research by Tiwari, Dash, & Narayanan (2018) says that policy-makers agree that foreign tourist arrivals lead to the increment of foreign exchange revenue, create more employment opportunities and advancement in the growth of the tourism industry, leading to the overall economic growth of the nation.

The state of Rajasthan owns unique topography, history, culture, customs and a relatively peaceful environment. It is the largest state in the country and latitudinal variation also provides it with varied landscape regulation as the altitude goes up to 1700 meters above the sea level. From the semi-green forests of Mount Abu to the dry grasslands of the Thar and the dry deciduous of Aravalis to the Bharatpur wetlands, the state has a plethora of geographical features to boast. The colors, cuisine, the proud history and the mysticism and romanticism of its vibrant culture and tradition is what charms tourists from all over the world. So, it can be rightly said that the state stands apart due to its uniqueness.

Objectives

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To examine the existing pattern of foreign tourists' arrival in the state.
- (2) To evaluate sharing percentage of foreign tourist arrival in India as per Rajasthan.
- (3) To access the problems hindering Tourism growth in the state.
- (4) To suggest pragmatic steps and measures that may be taken up to boost the industry in the state.

Methodology

This research is mainly based on secondary data collected

through various reports of the department of tourism, Government of India and Government of Rajasthan, journals, archives and newspapers. This is supplemented with primary data wherever required, which has been collected through personal interviews with government officials, tourists and local people. To find out the growth trends of foreign tourist's arrivals, compound annual growth rate (CAGR) from 1971 to 2016 has been calculated. To facilitate the knowledge and understanding of underlying realities of the existing situation, data is presented in the forms of table and graphs.

Review of Literature

Tourism, as an industry, is a boon for underdeveloped and developing countries. It has many positive impacts on growing economies of these countries as tourism provides an enormous boost to it. This industry is labor intensive i.e. labor is the main necessity rather than capital. In growing economies of underdeveloped and developing worlds, which suffer from a shortage of capital but have large labor workforce, tourism is like a match made in heaven. The national income receives a boost and the requirements for foreign exchange are met. It also helps in transforming regional economies, promoting regional handicrafts and monuments, and also provides for social intercourse between different cultures. This industry is more environment-friendly as compared to its other counterparts. It helps in maintaining political stability and peace as these are very important factors for a flourishing tourist center (Ganesh & Madhawi, 2007).

Although the tourism industry has a number of perks to flaunt, it also has its share of negatives. It brings about an undesirable social and cultural change as an increase in the number of tourists, increases the possibility of loss of the social identity of the place. At many places, evils like drugs, prostitution, and human trafficking become synonyms with tourism. There is also increase in hostility and tension among the tourists and the locals, which at times leads to violence and crime. The main purpose of the industry is to improve the economic conditions of the local people but mostly the major economic gains of the places are taken by big corporations which control the hotels, airplanes and so on and the local population does not benefit as much. Moreover, the construction activity required to meet the needs of tourists leads to a great deal of stress on natural

resources and increases pollution (Kakkar & Sapna, 2012). Long term perspective is required to accomplish a more sustainable economy by improving utilization of assets, promoting stability, developing skills, imparting training and better rewards for work. Wahab and Pigram's study (cited in Mansfeld and Winckler, 2008) finds that tourism, as an economic segment, has been perceived as a promising contributor of a more sustainable and viable economy of numerous nations around the world, especially in developing countries.

After a serious payment crisis faced by India in 1991, the Government of India identified high-yielding areas of tourism which could help in taking care of major macroeconomic issues, for example, unemployment, poor financial development and public debt. The critical component of tourism depends on large workforce and its ability to create employment among unskilled workforce. The government's role is considered crucial in promoting the growth of tourism. Besides marketing and promotion, tourist development focuses on aiding the infrastructure development through successful partnership with various stakeholders. Further, an arrangement of 'tourism satellite accounting' (TSA) is created to offer acknowledgment to tourist industry as a source of creating income and employment. The ministry of tourism has introduced yearly 'National Tourism Awards' (Tiwari et al., 2018) as well in order to boost this industry.

Rajasthan, being a labor intensive and a capital deficient economy, provides a proper model where the tourism industry could lead to social and economic upliftment. Rajasthan's share in the total tourist influx was at its height in 2005 when it shared 28.86% of total tourist arrivals in India but it has slowly decreased to a mere 16.99% in 2016. The growth of the tourism industry faces various problems which, if overcome, could pave the way for the state to realize its maximum potential and aid its economy, thereby letting it surpass the 'BIMARU' label. BIMARU is an acronym formed from the first letter of states of Bihar, MP, Rajasthan and UP. This word is used for states that suffer from poor economic conditions. The Rajasthan Tourism Industry has strengths like attractive souvenirs, good commuting services, a wide array of shopping products and diversity in tourism destinations. It suffers from flaws like lack of safety measures for visitors, shortage of courses

on tourism and training. Opportunities are available to introduce innovations in the tourism products according to the current fashion, marketing and promotional strategies, eco-tourism and support from the government. But at the same time, political instability, underdeveloped infrastructure and lack of public-private partnership presents a threat to the industry (Sharma, 2013). A study done by Barta (1990) also states that the state suffers from various problems and weaknesses. Some of these hurdles are inbuilt in nature and some are formed by the people who do not know the pros of tourism. He strongly suggests that tourist activities in Rajasthan must be taken as a dynamic tool to uplift the social status of our society.

While the state faces a number of challenges, it also has a number of opportunities to become a hotspot for tourists. Rajasthan possesses a critical place for being considered as the most favored tourist destination of the entire world. Tourism in Rajasthan is a culture and it is commercially developed too (Sharma, 2008). The art, culture, heritage hotels, forts and palaces, colorful fairs and festivals, historical fables and tales can be used as attractive points to overcome the challenges that the industry faces (Dharmwani & Laveena, 2013).

Tourism is a sociocultural phenomenon in which cultural forces, including gender, influence the experiences of travelers (Gibson, Jordan, & Berdychevsky, 2013). A study done by Dempsey (cited in Seow and Brown, 2018), finds that the segment of solo travelers is growing exponentially within the international tourism market. Safety and security are the major concerns for tourists when they visit any place. As a result, a perceived threat in a particular region adversely affects the tourism industry of that place. Similarly, terrorism has a negative impact on the minds of travelers and acts as a repellent as it unleashes an atmosphere of constant fear in the minds of both the locals and the tourists, who like to travel to peaceful places rather than put their lives in danger. The terrorist attacks of 2008 in Jaipur had a negative impact on the tourist arrivals to the city. The tourist arrivals in the year 2008 amounted to 1477646 which reduced to 1073414 in 2009. There was a sharp decline of 27.36 % in foreign tourists and 9.87% domestic tourists with a total decline of 10.74%. It took Jaipur 4 years to regain the figures of 2008 and it was able to accomplish this only by the year 2013. The study done by

Seow and Brown (2018) offers some understanding about Asian female travelers who prefer to travel independently. Asian female travelers identified safety and security as some of their prime concerns for travel. Therefore, initiatives that ensure a safe travel space for these solo

travelers to make them feel comfortable and safe in their solo adventures are a must. By ensuring safety and security, a vast tourist potential of solo travelers can be tapped.

Table 1: Number of Foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan, 1971-2016

Year	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
No. of tourists	42500	46350	54611	55781	66207	92272	125112	160134
Year	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
No. of tourists	195837	208216	220440	237444	266221	259637	268774	291763
Year	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
No. of tourists	348260	366435	419651	417641	494150	547802	540738	436801
Year	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
No. of tourists	534749	560946	605060	591369	562685	623100	606283	428437
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
No. of tourists	628560	971772	1131164	1220640	1401042	1477646	1073414	1278523
Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
No. of tourists	1351974	1451370	1437162	1525574	1475311	1513729		

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2016-2017

Table-1 reveals the year-wise foreign tourist arrivals in Rajasthan from 1971 to 2016 which generally shows an increasing trend due to the unique culture and intriguing traditions of the land. The people of Rajasthan follow unique customs as it is the land of the desert and this attracts a number of tourists from all around the country and the world. The culture here is almost 5000 years old and shows a rare blend of tradition and history mixed with contemporary lifestyle. The art also shows diverse forms and enthralls visitors. The hospitality of the people is visible in the welcoming phrase 'padharo mahro desh' meaning 'welcome to my country'. From Table 1, it can be

seen that mostly there has been an upward trend in the foreign tourist's arrival with some sharp declines in 1994, 2002 and 2009. The Mumbai bomb blasts in 1994, the political instability in the Gulf countries in 1994, 2001 (9/11) attacks on World trade center, terrorist attack on Indian parliament in 2001 and the series of 9 bomb blasts that took place in May 2008 led to a decline in tourist numbers in these years. These incidents created a widespread sense of insecurity in international tourists. By the year 2013, the decline was made-up fully because of the government policies and the welcoming nature of Rajasthani people.

Table 2: Foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan and their percentage change per annum, 2000- 2016

Year	No. of tourists	Percent change from previous year
2000	623100	
2001	608283	-2.38
2002	428437	-29.57
2003	628560	46.71
2004	971772	54.6
2005	1131164	16.4
2006	1220164	7.87
2007	1401042	14.82
2008	1477646	5.47
2009	1073414	-27.36
2010	1278523	19.11
2011	1351974	5.74
2012	1454370	7.35
2013	1437162	-1.1
2014	1525574	6.51
2015	1475311	3.29
2016	1513729	2.6

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2016-2017

Table-2 shows statistics of foreign tourists' arrival in Rajasthan from 2000 to 2016 and percentage change over the previous year. Statistics show that 623100 tourists arrived during 2000 as compared to 1513729 tourists during 2016. The foreign tourists' arrivals have been fluctuating constantly during the years 2000 to 2016. As this statistical data shows, there is a general increasing trend of foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan as a result of the new state tourism policy of 2001. State Tourism Policy of Rajasthan 2001 was a logical policy designed to tap into the vast economic potential of the tourism industry. It focused on employment generation and development of a ready market for rich and varied handicrafts. It also emphasized the preservation of the biodiversity and the heritage of the state. It proposes to accelerate the economic contribution of the tourism industry in the socio-economic development of

the state. The various festivals which are a hub of cultural activities in the state were also to be used to promote tourism. An annual brochure was to be published which was distributed in India and abroad providing information about the tourist places in a bid to boost tourist attraction. Heritage hotels were also an important part of this policy as tourists generally prefer these hotels over their counterparts for the purpose of stay. Additionally, Rajasthan has been a pioneer in setting up these hotels in the country. Sometimes the flow of tourists experiences a downfall, like in the years 2001, 2002, 2009 and 2013. There are various reasons behind this like malpractices in shopping, lack of safety at tourist places, lack of guidance and publicity of the tourist place. All these factors adversely affect tourist arrival which results in decreased employability for local tourist guides and tour operators

and reduced foreign exchange generation. Heritage hotels were opened to give a boost to tourism industry but the mismanagement of the administration, lack of staff, insufficient allocation and utilization of funds and poor marketing and promotion led to some of these hotels being shut down. Special royal trains like Palace on Wheels and Royal Rajasthan on Wheels, which covers the journey of the golden triangle of tourism, are running at a loss due to high maintenance costs. The Tourist Assistance Force (TAF)

assigned for the safety of tourists is not available in every district. Out of 33 districts its only present in 11 districts. Even in the districts where TAF is available, it is often understaffed. Terrorist activities and crimes targeting foreign tourists also play a crucial role in the decline of overall tourist rate. Not much has been done on this part, therefore, Rajasthan is not able to increase the number of repeat travelers and the number of new tourists.

Table 3: Percentage share of Rajasthan's tourists visitors in India

Year	India (Millions)	Rajasthan (Million)	% of tourists visiting India
2000	2.65	0.62	23.51
2001	2.54	0.61	23.95
2002	2.38	0.43	18
2003	2.73	0.63	23.02
2004	3.46	0.97	28.09
2005	3.92	1.13	28.86
2006	4.45	1.22	27.42
2007	5.08	1.4	27.58
2008	5.28	1.48	27.99
2009	5.17	1.07	20.76
2010	5.78	1.28	22.12
2011	6.31	1.35	21.43
2012	6.58	1.45	22.06
2013	6.97	1.44	20.51
2014	7.68	1.53	19.92
2015	8.03	1.48	18.43
2016	8.89	1.51	16.99

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2016-2017

Table 3 shows statistics of foreign tourist arrivals in the state between 2000-2016 and as a percent share of total foreign tourist visits in the country during the period. Data reveals that in the year 2000 the number of tourists visiting the state were 0.623 million and the number increased to 1.51 million in 2016 but the percent share decreased from

23.51 (2000) to 16.99 percent (2016). The statistics show that there is an increasing trend in the total number of tourists arriving in the state except the years 2001, 2002, 2009, and 2015. The government of Rajasthan has realized the importance of the tourism sector and has announced a pragmatic policy in the year 2001. The aim of the policy is to

ensure the optimum utilization of tourism resources by scientific method and to speed up the tourism contribution in the socio-economic development of Rajasthan.

The policy focused on enhancing the growth of the tourism industry. It resulted in increased number of tourist from 23.51 in the year 2000 to 28.86 percent in the year 2005. To address the issue of shortage of accommodation facility, a new hotel policy has been announced in the year 2006. Later, this was replaced by the state tourism policy of 2007. In the new policy, land revenue rules were changed to facilitate the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes. It helped in increasing the number of rooms for tourists and aided in the constant arrival of tourists. However, May 13, 2008, is marked as a black day

for the tourism sector in Rajasthan as 9 serial bombs exploded within fifteen minutes in Jaipur city, which is a most popular destination for foreign and domestic tourists. As per the data of the government of Rajasthan, Jaipur district contributes a total of 40-47 percent in the total foreign tourist's arrival in the state. This incident badly affected tourism in Rajasthan. The state saw a major decrease in the number of tourists' arrivals, loss of jobs, many tourism industry worker rooms went vacant and those rooms which were previously booked were canceled. This situation continued from 2009 to 2013. In the year 2015, the new tourism policy was announced by the government of Rajasthan to promote tourism in Rajasthan.

Table 4: Annual compound growth rate of foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan (1971-2016)

Time period	CAGR (in %)
1971-80	19.31
1981-90	7.35
1991-00	2.61
2001-10	8.64
2011-16	2.29

Table 4 shows CAGR of foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan from 1971 to 2016. For calculating the CAGR, the time period has been divided into five sub-periods: 1971-80, 1981-90, 1991-2000, 2001-2010 and 2011-16. Data shows that CAGR varies between 2.29% to 19.31% in the total time period. In the first sub-period, the growth rate is highest at 19.31% because of the establishment of the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) in 1979, with its prime motive to establish, develop and execute projects and schemes to attract, enable and accelerate domestic and foreign tourists' arrival in the state. which was followed by the launch of diverse tourism products to complement it. RTDC, to achieve its objectives, opened up tourist centers providing midway facilities along important national highways and major link roads. The state government has made separate allocation of funds in successive five-year-plans since the fifth plan to enhance development related activities in the tourism sector. It started investing in

transport facilities in the Fourth plan when it spent Rs. 1.63 crores for the purpose. In the Fifth plan with an outlay of Rs. 4 crores, the government focused on creating tourist accommodation and opened a chain of hotels under the name of RTDC in the state. After the first time period, the CAGR decreased because of low investment in transport and communication sectors. In the fifth plan, Government planned 19.2 % of total budget to be spent on Tourism sector but only was 17.4 % actually invested in this sector. After the fourth plan, for the next four plans i.e. V plan to VIII plan, the government gave no importance to this sector, so the growth rate regularly declined from the year 1981 to 2000. Following the decline, the growth rate experienced a boom in the next decade to 8.64% as a result of the 2001 State Tourism Policy of Rajasthan, the period of 2011-2016 has seen a decline into 2.29% but has not been studied properly as it is relatively recent.

Problems in tourism development in Rajasthan

Despite its many tourist attractions tourism has not been developed to its full potential in Rajasthan because of the following constraints:

- **Poor Infrastructure:** The infrastructure in the state is concentrated around the industrial towns and is vastly neglected in tourist centers, which hinders the development of tourism in Rajasthan due to a series of problems. The lack of link-roads, in addition to the absence of basic amenities like clean toilets, ATMs, markets, petrol pumps, bus-stands, railway stations at all places of tourist interest, act as big roadblocks in the path of a satisfying tourist

experience. Limited intra-city air connectivity is also a major hurdle. Increased airline access is always a key factor in deciding tourist arrivals and earnings (Carlsen & Jaufeerally, 2003). The connectivity of the tribal areas to the urban centers is very poor. Thus, these areas are mostly left outside the reach of a tourist.

- **Accommodation:** The Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) was set up on April 1, 1979, with the aim to provide tourists with shelter, food and travel facilities. It runs a chain of hotels and motels providing accommodation for tourists.

Table 5: Accommodation Facilities

S. No.	Unit	Run by RTDC	On Lease	Shut Down	Total
1	Hotels	30	-	9	39
2	Motels	10	1	11	22
3	Cafeteria	-	3	4	7
4	Yatrika	-	-	3	3
5	P.O.W.	1	-	-	1
6	R.R.O.W.	1	-	-	1
7	Transport Unit	1	-	-	1
8	Package Tour	1	-	-	1
9	Padaw Restaurant	1	-	-	1
	Total	45	4	27	76

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2016-2017

Table 6: Room occupancy

Year	Occupied Rooms (%)	Overnight Stay in Rooms (%)	Total Tourist arrival (lacks)
2011-12	32.84	31.87	1.74
2012-13	32.42	31.88	1.71
2013-14	32.54	32.27	1.70
2014-15	30.72	30.01	1.71
2015-16(till Dec'15)	25.51	25.39	1.06

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2015-2016

Table-5 shows the distribution of accommodation facilities made available by RTDC amounting to a total of 76 units. These contain 902 rooms and 4 dormitories, which can accommodate 1876 people. Out of these 76 units, 27 are closed. In 2015, the tourist arrivals amounted to 366.62 lakhs, which when compared to the sheltering provided by the RTDC makes the accommodation seem negligible.

Even in these conditions where the accommodations seem negligible as compared to the tourist arrivals, the room occupancy in these hotels is at best one-third of the total available rooms, as shown in table 6. This is because the hotels are constantly understaffed, which, in turn, leads to lack of clean living spaces and other facilities.

Table 7: Tourist Assistance Force

S No	Tourist Place	Coordinator		Supervisor		Security Officials		Total	
		Sanctioned	Working	Sanctioned	Working	Sanctioned	Working	Sanctioned	Working
1	Jaipur	-	1	-	4	-	33	-	38
2	Jodhpur	-	-	1	1	22	13	23	14
3	Jaisalmer	-	-	1	1	20	4	21	5
4	Bharatpur	-	-	1	1	7	7	8	8
5	Chittorgarh	-	-	1	-	9	3	10	3
6	Bikaner	-	-	1	1	14	5	15	6
7	Sawai Madhopur	-	-	-	-	5	5	5	5
8	Ajmer-Pushkar	-	-	1	1	18	12	19	13
9	Bundi	-	-	-	-	10	6	10	6
10	Mount Abu	-	-	1	-	19	19	20	19
11	Jhalawar	-	-	-	-	8	3	8	3
	Total	-	1	7	9	132	110	139	120

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2015-2016

- Safety:** In 2001, a Tourism Assistance Force (TAF) was set up which was initially staffed with policemen but they were later replaced by ex-army servicemen (in 2002). This Force was required to guide tourists about the distance to tourist places and save them from the exploitation and wrongdoings of the peddlers, hawkers, touts and beggars. The TAF, although a step towards promoting tourism safety, suffers from numerous problems as it is only available in 11 districts of the total 33 and a meager 139 posts are sanctioned out of which 120 posts are staffed. Apart from that, the

force often fails to carry out its duties properly. The conditions of the TAF can be better understood through table 7. The terrorist attack of 2008 caused a major setback to the tourism industry of the state but was not followed by any initiative by the state. It has also been found that even a single case of crime against foreign tourists leave a very bad and lasting impression on safety and security assurance. A recent incident where the General Manager of hotel Sheraton in Jaipur forced himself in hotel room of two Mexican female tourists and molested them, has shaken the foundations of tourism in the whole

county (India Today, 2018). Such incidents lead to decrease in tourist inflow.

- **Promotion and Marketing:** Promotion and marketing are the most important pillars of any successful industry. The Rajasthan Tourism Department uses various sources like electronic media, print media, national and international conferences and seminars and marts, amongst others, to attract the tourism attention and as a medium of marketing. A total of 42 Tourism Information Bureau (TIB) in 21 districts have been set up including destinations like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai (Rajasthan Development Report, 2006; pg-204). All the five TIBs in Bundi,

Sawai Madhopur, Seekar, Nathdwara and Dungarpur, have been closed according to the Rajasthan Progress Report 2015-16. The closing up of TIBs has led to a halt on the spread of any information about the recent tourism happenings in the state. Also, the funds sanctioned by the government for promotion of the Tourism department are largely left unspent. In 2014-15, Rs. 1914.32 Lacs was sanctioned but only Rs 1245.90 lacs were spent, whereas in 2015-16, Rs. 4533.92 lacs was sanctioned but only 1479.13 lacs could be spent (till December 2015). This under-spending leads to improper promotions which directly affect the tourism industry in a negative way.

Table 8: Budget

Year	Annual Plan (in lac rupees)	Expenditure (in lac rupees)
2012-13	3554.02	3441.53
2013-14	6688.26	5838.63
2014-15	6111.63	4332.32
2015-16(till Dec'15)	13647.38	5293.97

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2015-2016

Table 9: Budget for marketing and promotion

Year	Sanctioned Amount (in lacs rupees)	Expenditure (in lacs rupees)
2012-13	1535.80	1528.73
s2013-14	1942.47	1434.33
2014-15	1914.32	1245.90
2015-16 (Till Dec'15)	4533.92	1479.13

Source: Progress report, Department of Tourism, Rajasthan, 2015-2016

- **Finance:** The Government of Rajasthan each year increases the finances provided for the Tourism Department but the allocated budgets are underspent. This under-utilization of allocated funds hinders the potential of tourism in the state. Table 8 shows the annual plans and expenditure and table 9 shows the annual budget for marketing and promotion by the Department of Tourism. It is

evident from the budget data that tourism sector budget allocation has been falling consistently over the past several years. For example, in the year 2005-06 government allocated 0.29 percent of its budget to tourism which declined to 0.11 percent in the year 2013-14. The Annual Report of the Tourism Department shows poor utilization of even the allocated budget. For example, the government

allocated 42 crore rupees for tourism sector but only 18 crore were spent. It shows government and officials' negligence towards the tourism sector. If the entire available budget is properly utilized to its maximum extent, it would aid in infrastructure development, promotion and marketing activities, and safety and security, which would make Rajasthan a more attractive place for the tourists.

- **Lack of Skilled Workforce:** The state suffers from inadequate, inappropriate distributions of human resources, lack of skilled guides, tour operators, and workforce in the tourism department. More than 20% of the posts are lying vacant in the tourism department and this is responsible for the sorry state of the TIBs. TIBs lack adequate and qualified manpower and most of the people working in the tourism industry in Rajasthan lack communication skills. They unable to converse in any foreign language other than English. Rajasthan attracts tourists from all over the world and most of the travelers speak in their native language. As a result, lack of proper communication becomes a big problem.
- **Limited availability of foreign exchange facilities:** This facility appears confined to three-star/ five-star hotels and selected banks only. The State also falls short on the availability of a widespread network of ATMs in the cities of tourists' interest.
- **Inadequate information:** Tourists needs authentic and hands-on information to visit the place and have a pleasant experience. Tourists do not hold the government tourist centers in high regard as they do not provide updated and complete information. They do not provide much help to tourists to plan the tour as per their needs. There is a lack of information on various tour packages, accommodation tariffs, reservations and different modes of transportation, their frequency and cost. People who are the source of information possess indigenous knowledge but it is not sufficient to cater to the needs of tourists arriving in the area. They need to be well versed with new knowledge and technological advancement too.

- **Marketing lacunae:** There are many internet sites providing detailed information related to tourist places, hotels, travel facilities, event calendar etc. for tourists visiting Rajasthan. However, widespread planned target-oriented marketing is unavailable due to the lack of funds allocated for promotion. Tourism department of Rajasthan is not able to aggressively market their assets.
- **Ambiguous government policies and taxation:** Lack of clarity, frequent changes, improper implementation in government policies, and higher taxation on private sector tourist service providers adversely affect the tourism sector. The state governments presently have no legal provisions to give protection to visiting tourists.

Suggestions

This study proposes certain recommendations to deal with problems of the tourism industry in the state.

- **Infrastructure development:** The government needs to make the state more accessible to tourists via better connectivity through air, rail and roadways. Reasonable and comfortable accommodation and transport are the basic needs of tourists. Therefore, construction and maintenance of hotels, guest houses and various modes of commuting should be made a priority. The government also needs to invest in man-made attractions such as the entrance to the city, and other architectural attractions within the city to make tourists feel welcome. There is also a need to set up well equipped "tourist service centers" at airports, railway and bus stations, highways and within the city to help and provide information to the tourists. The government should conduct a situation analysis of the tourism industry in the state to find out the actual scenario and the hurdles in the growth of tourism so that effective solutions can be implemented to curb the problems.
- **Effective utilization of Budget:** Currently, budget allocated to tourism is underutilized. It needs well thought planning and effective utilization to develop infrastructure and safety measures.

- Promotion:** Promotion of tourism must be in a way to make people believe that they will have an incredible and beautiful experience while visiting Rajasthan. To make this a reality, there is a need to upgrade the overall infrastructure in the state. The extensive electronic campaign, several exhibitions, road shows must be held in the country and abroad to provide a glimpse of the rich heritage of Rajasthan. Colourful events such as kite flying festivals should be organized to attract people from other countries. The prior knowledge of such events must be made available to people and support should be extended to tour operators for better advertisement and publicity of the events. Tourist packages should be formed in collaboration with airlines, railways, hotels, travel agencies. There should be specific tourist events catering to different groups of people such as adventure seekers, spiritual tourists and other mixed activities as today's tourists are no content with sun, sand and sea and seek tailor-made experiences. The government should also encourage the development of new tourist products as camel safari, palace on wheels, water-parks, rope-ways and apna-utsavs for tourists, which should then be marketed aggressively and extensively through various media.
- Information and communication:** Technological advancement has made one part of the world familiar with another part by facilitating all sorts of information. People sitting in different parts of the world can know all type of information provided it is on the internet. This widespread availability of information can be exploited to boost tourism as well. With the growing userbase of internet among people, travel opportunities have opened up for small-budget backpackers and independent travelers. Various travel blogs and websites act as guidebooks for a low-budget travel, while also not missing out on the experiences of the 'authentic' Rajasthani and Marwari culture. Caruana et.al. (2008)'s discourse on consumer independence through alternative guidebooks constructing the ideals of an independent traveler can be seen in such guidebooks in case of Rajasthan as well. One such blog being 'soultravelblog', where even the entry is headed as 'Ethical travel in Rajasthan'. This blog provides information to reach remote villages to experience authentic Marwari culture. It also provide an itinerary of places and pointers on safe travel in Rajasthan. The most interesting is the section discussing female solo travelers which is a rather recent niche that has taken on travelling, and inclusion of such are rather encouraging signs. Overall, blogs and guidebooks like these can prove to be the encouragement push that the Rajasthan tourism needs to encourage more travelers into the industry. The state tourist website must be replete with relevant and timely information and should be launched in different languages to cater to national and international visitors. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs etc. should be utilized to share information on tour packages, destination, service quality, social condition and the environment of the attraction. Apart from this, tourist service centers must provide reliable, credible, timely and relevant information.
- Skilled workforce:** Apart from infrastructure and service, quality is a major determinant in the success of tourism industry. The quality of services rendered goes hand in hand with a skilled and motivated workforce. The government must impart training, skill development programs and education to the workforce so that they can respond to the emerging demands of the industry. There is also a need to increase the manpower deployed in this industry. The number of the TAF should also be increased, as there is a need that they should be positioned at railway and bus stations, markets and other places often visited by tourists.
- Safety:** An emphasis on the increased safety and security features will create a favorable environment for high tourist inflow. Protection against crime and increased safety measures are important to provide quality tourism. There should be continuous vigilance of tourist spots to prevent crimes against tourists. Increasing cases of sexual harassment need to be taken seriously and a special

task force should be trained and assigned to prevent it. There is a need to make separate provisions for penalty and punishments for any crime or exploitation of tourists to reduce such incidents and provide a safe environment.

- **Research:** Globalization has granted new opportunities to the tourism industry. It has helped in technological developments, communication technologies and transportation facilities. Research is needed to tap into the opportunities provided in order to better understand the existing scenario of the tourism sector and to identify ideal visitors. This can be done by collecting, compiling and analyzing tourist information to find out the present demand and future trends, which will assist in devising ways to be better equipped to deal with the same.

In many developing states, tourism has appeared as a solution to their regional problems, this is a key aspect in the promotion of economic growth. Various stakeholders in tourism industry should come together to develop the trust of tourists. Rajasthan had few incidents in the past which showed Rajasthan in a bad light. To deal with this problem, government needs to develop a network of locals, shopkeepers, tourist guides, police, administration and media working together. It will help to ensure the quality, hospitability and safety of tourists in future.

Conclusion

Tourism has gained worldwide recognition and is rapidly growing. It has developed a highly intricate phenomenon with multidimensional economic and socio-cultural effects. It has emerged as the largest industry with talent and vast growth potential in the world.

The study shows that there is an increasing trend in foreign tourist arrival in Rajasthan in terms of numbers but the CAGR is fluctuating between 2.35% to 17.22%. The period of 1971 to 1980 saw highest CAGR because of the establishment of RTDC. The number of foreign tourists is fluctuating from the year 2000 to 2012 due to crimes against tourists, terrorist attacks, lack of promotion and marketing, poor maintenance, poor tourist facilities, and lack of governmental and local support. All this has resulted in decreased employability for local tourist guides and tour operators, and a decrease in foreign exchange earnings

from the tourism industry. The state needs to address all these challenges and take steps to improve the existing condition. In the state of Rajasthan, Tourism activity has helped in generating employment in chronic drought-affected areas too, paving the way for drought-proofing of the region and generating a lot of economic activities for all segments of society of the desert region. A variety of handlooms and handicraft products are available for the attraction of tourists but still the state lacks foreign tourist arrival. Steps should be taken to ensure the safety and security of tourists and creating an environment that is free from crime will act as a catalyst for tourists' arrival and the word of mouth of a satisfied tourist is the best promotion of tourism in any area.

The state has shown notable prospects to be a sought-after tourist destination worldwide. Rajasthan is rich in cultural heritage, natural resources, biodiversity and presents a number of attractions for foreign tourists. The government should take initiatives to promote tourism activity throughout the state by organizing exhibitions at places which have a tourism potential. Besides, new sites should also be identified and developed to improve the tourist attractions in the state.

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