

## Growth and Development of Tourism in Bihar

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### Abstract

Bihar is nestled on the banks of the holy river Ganga in the eastern part of India. The state shares its borders with Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. Bihar derives its name from a word "Vihara" that means monastery since the place in the past was a major learning centre of Buddhism. Ruled over by many great empires, it is renowned for its glorious past. Every nook and corner of this sacred land is dotted with historical monuments and Buddhist monasteries. Bihar is also renowned for its religious places. There are many Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and Sikh shrines, which abound this ancient land. Some of the noteworthy Bihar travel destinations are Nalanda, Rajgir, Bodh Gaya, Patna, Vaishali, Vikramshila, and Pawapuri.

**Keywords:** Bihar, land, travel, Inreligious, mouments

### 1.0 Introduction

Bihar is nestled on the banks of the holy river Ganga in the eastern part of India. The state shares its borders with Bengal, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. Bihar derives its name from a word "Vihara" that means monastery since the place in the past was a major learning centre of Buddhism. Ruled over by many great empires, it is renowned for its glorious past. Every nook and corner of this sacred land is dotted with historical monuments and Buddhist monasteries. Bihar is also renowned for its religious places. There are many Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and Sikh shrines, which abound this ancient land. Some of the noteworthy Bihar travel destinations are Nalanda, Rajgir, Bodh Gaya, Patna, Vaishali, Vikramshila, and Pawapuri.

## 2.0 State Tourism Policy

Rich in its historical traditions and ancient splendor, the culturally rich Bihar has derived its name from "Vihar". It was called the land of "Viharas" for its having a good number of recreational sites where people enjoyed activities in serene surroundings by the side of ponds and lakes. Endowed with a rich cultural and religious heritage, Bihar was a seat of power of the vast and powerful Magadh Empire, whose might had checked further onslaught of Alexander the Great. Bihar was cradle of civilization and nerve centre of religious activities of Hindu, Boudh, Jain, Sikh and Islam.

It has seen rise and fall of prosperous empires. This is a land of ancient universities of Nalanda and Vikramshila, the seat of higher learning, which spread knowledge far and wide through its students coming from different countries of the world. In this backdrop, Bihar has much to offer and showcase for promotion and development of tourism. The remnants of the two ancient universities, Nalanda and Vikramshila, the antiques and artifacts forming a treasure trove of Bihar's ancient heritage are already attracting tourists.

Bihar promises development of tourism to its optimum level. It has the sacred Ganga river as its lifeline and huge water mass in form of many rivers and rivulets in North Bihar, the Gandak, Kosi and many more and the vitally important Son river which forms the lifeline in South Bihar. Bihar is surrounded by West Bengal in the East, Jharkhand in the South, Uttar Pradesh in the West and it has the international boundary in the North with Nepal. Bihar was a seat of power of the magnificent Magadh Empire from 6th and 5th century BC when its great ruler, Ajatshatru, reined from its capital at Rajgriha (modern Rajgir). Later, in the Fourth century BC the Mauryan ruler and great warrior Emperor Ashoka wielded a vastly extended Magadh empire from its capital Pataliputra, the modern Patna. Ashoka turned to Buddhism and had woven well the unity and peace in a sublime thread of love, piety, harmony and sacrifice. Ashoka's edicts and pillars across Bihar and other parts of the country are the living examples of Bihar's rich cultural traditions and credentials attracting tourists including scores of Buddhists from across the world. The great Gupta Empire of Magadh kingdom

reined by the Gupta rulers from ancient Pataliputra had enriched art and culture heritage of the country in the 4th and 5th Century AD. The Pal rulers ruled here till 1197 AD. Bihar also mattered in the reins of the Muslim rulers from 12th to 17th centuries. A soil rich with cerebral power of fearless Biharis had much to offer in freedom struggle against British colonial rule. It even figured in the world politics of struggle against colonial powers when Mahatma Gandhi on his return from South Africa experimented Satyagrah first time in Champaran, which is famous as the karmabhoomi of Bapu against the exploitative Neel (Indigo) farmers of British origin. It has also the Ashoka's installed pillar with Lion capital that has braved more than two millennia raising its head in all its splendors. With its rich heritage of antiques, artefacts, historical facts and figures going into its favors, Bihar is a blend of beautiful and bountiful nature, natural resources, the vital sparkling pure water, important archaeological finds, and rich culture. It has been attracting domestic and foreign tourists from the ancient times. The Travelogues of the Chinese travelers Huen Tsang and Fa-Hien describe historical splendor of Bihar which offers much to tourists irrespective of their age and class. Herein, lies the history of the young prince of Nepal, Siddhartha, transforming into Lord Buddha by getting enlightenment through sheer penance at Bodh Gaya under the sacred Bodhi tree which is attracting the Buddhists tourists for ages from across the world. Bihar has 22 Nirvan Sthals of 24 Jain Tirthankars attracting the people following the Jain religion. Development of these tourist's sites has been undertaken on a large scale to promote religious tourism. Tourism has established itself as 'smokeless' industry in the world and its role in the socio-economic development of a country is well established. Bihar government has also given tourism the status of industry and development works in this pursuit have been undertaken. After division of Bihar many tourism destinations went geographically into the fold of Jharkhand state. Now Bihar needs afresh. Its new distinct Tourism Policy to be planned in a manner to promote tourism industry as a vital part of the vibrant economic activities of the state.

### **2.1 Commercial Importance of Tourism:**

The world tourism industry accounts for direct employment to over 144 million persons and manifold indirect employment. For the present, however, India has 0.4 per cent share of world tourism. International tourism industry has 10.2 per cent share of the global GDP with 10.6 per cent of the

global work force being engaged in tourism. In India tourism and travel sector generate employment to 9.3 million people with optimism of raising this to 12.9 million jobs to the people by 2010. This will mean the tourism industry providing job to one person out of 15 people by 2010 in the country. Every rupee spent by a tourist in the state changes hands thirteen times. Every hotel room generates direct employment to three persons and indirect employment opportunities to eight persons.

## **2.2 Role of State Government:**

- As a catalyst.
- As a promoter, facilitator and infrastructure provider.
- As a pioneer, planner and joint investor with private groups to boost the tourism.
- As formulator of plans and policies.
- Maintenance of law and order.
- Deploying tourist police force.
- Disposing grievances.
- Standardizing quality of tourism product and services.
- Enacting suitable laws for tourism.
- Framing Rules and Regulations for tourism development.
- Timely execution of policies, qualitative improvement and up gradation of comprehensive master plan of the state with a focus on regional, sub-regional areas and tourist circuits etc.
- External assistance.
- Central assistance.
- State Government Assistance.
- Private Sector investment for a planned tourism development and creation of infrastructure.

## **2.3 Basic Infrastructure for Tourism:**

Keeping in view a great potential of tourism in Bihar, the creation of basic infrastructure for tourism development is imperative. Important components for infrastructural development are - Arranging accommodation for increased number of tourists, building of highways on tourist circuits, international level airports with total aviation back up and facilities, local transport, rail routes linking

tourist spots with full amenities and facilities, the vital telecommunication link, continuous quality electricity supply with elaborate arrangements, and other essential amenities.

Religious circuits for the Boudh, Jain, Hindu, Sikh, and Islam religions are to be developed with special work plans to promote religious tourism making the religious circuits attractive with suitable tour packages and facilities. Hindu, Bodh, Jain, Ramayana, Sufi, Gandhi and Eco tourism have to find profound expression in development of tourist sites and spots. The state government as well as the private sector shall contribute their mite in growth of tourism infrastructure with the state playing the lead role of a catalytic agent in some sectors. The state will endeavor to promote private sector participation in infrastructural development for the tourism industry. Efforts will be made to dovetail external assistance, central assistance and state plan resources with private investments to attain the set goals as under the Master Plan.

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