

# Tourism in Madurai-Prospects and Problems

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Tourism is assuming a major role in the economy of every nation and in the lives of every individual. With financial independence, the number of people taking tourism for leisure and to break the monotonous life style is on the rise. Tourism development is directly related to tourism services and tourism products which includes the interplay of individuals, business organizations and the government. This paper talks about the various services that government is taking to improve tourism in the temple city of Madurai.*

*Keywords: Tourism, development, government.*

## Introduction

The origin of the word “tourist” dates back to 1292 AD. It has come from the word ‘tour’. A number of experts have defined the term: “Tourists are the voluntary temporary travelers, travelling in the expectations of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively and non-recurrent round-trip” (Cohen, 1988). Dictionary Universal says “tourist is a person who makes a journey for the sake of curiosity for the fun of travelling”.

Tourism is now assuming a major role in the lives of people; it is evident that it is also becoming a powerful process that affects all parts of the globe. It is embraced by various people as a new trend and characteristics, and also an activity in which the masses can now take part (subject to access to discretionary forms of spending). This form of discretionary activity mirrors from the post war changes in western society, with the rise in disposable income and spending on consumer goods and services, the first major wave of growth concerned home ownership, the second car ownership and now, finally, access to tourism and international travel.

International and domestic travel is a defining feature of the modern day lifestyle that characterizes the consumer society. While the car has given more people access to tourism and leisure opportunities within their own country, access to air travel has made international travel and tourism products and services more widely available to the populace.

Tourism is thus a phenomenon that is constantly evolving, developing and reformulating itself as a consumer activity. It is important to illustrate the reasons why tourism assumes an important role globally. Tourism is a discretionary activity (i.e. people do not need to do it to

survive, as with consuming food and water). Tourism is of growing economic significance at a global scale-in excess of the rate of growth for many economies

### **Tourism in India**

In the words of Nehru, India is “a land of contrasts”, where rural tranquility rubs shoulders with metropolitan bustle, austerity with pomp and show, and pageantry with simplicity. History has been equally generous in bequeathing a treasure of monuments. There is the immortal Taj, the Dravidian Temples of the South, especially those of Madurai, and the world-famous frescoes of Ajanta and Ellora. There is also no dearth of cities that create an impression on the tourist. In the words of Mark Twain, India is “the one country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bonded and free and on land that all men desire to have seen and having seen once by even a glimpse would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the globe combined.” This sums up the relationship of history with tourism and how these two put together contribute towards the development of the country’s economy.<sup>1</sup>

The WTTC has identified India as one of the world’s foremost tourist growth centres in the coming decade. After Turkey, India is expected to achieve the fastest rate of growth of the total amount of economic activity likely to be generated by travel and tourism, at 9.7 per cent over the next 10 years. The largest employment creation after China is expected to take place in India over the same period. The growth in ‘visitor exports’ or spending by international tourists is likely to be the fastest in India at 14.3 per cent annum over the next decade.

### **Scope and Prospects of Tourism in India**

India has to realize its enormous potential in tourism as it must provide exclusive world-class tourism products and services at destinations to compete successfully for a larger share of the Asian tourism market. Today, outbound tourism from India far exceeds visitor traffic to the country partly because there is a lack of world-class products and services at destinations within the country. The scope and reach of tourism will have to be broadened through the development of competitive destinations that match international standards in terms of price and quality and also satisfy the domestic and international travellers. India’s international

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<sup>1</sup> A. K. Bhatia, “Tourism Development – Principles & Practices”, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi Reprint 2004, p.307.ISBN: 81 207 2409 7(HB).

arrival figures have not been able to keep pace with neighboring countries and have been exceeded by Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Dubai and the Maldives while there are 80 domestic tourists for every international tourist. Domestic tourism can form the basis of a viable and sustainable tourism industry and has grown at a phenomenal rate of 4.6 per cent share of domestic tourism worldwide.<sup>2</sup>

World Tourism Organization (WTO) statistics indicate that tourism industry will continue to expand over the years. According to WTO, international tourist arrivals worldwide will reach 1.5 billion by 2020. These tourists in their turn spend trillions of dollars in the host countries visited during their travel, resulting in great increase in economic activity. From the time a decision is taken to visit a particular destination for the purpose of tourism and travel, till the time a tourist returns home, a wide range of activities would have taken place involving many organizations and components.

Tourism is a highly competitive industry; the traveler has a wide range of choices and looks for good value for money. The lack of quality infrastructure, uncompetitive rates, indifferent or poor product quality, difficulty in getting access to information on travel and tourist destinations, untrained service providers, and above all, the lack of hygiene, has an enormously negative effect on the competitiveness of the tourism product.

A world class destination requires professional planning to prevent haphazard, uncontrolled growth, spatial and land use planning, strict architectural controls, sewerage infrastructure and water treatment plants. It requires improvement of entry points and appropriate facilitation services. Equally important is the behaviour of the host population. Training programmes are required not only for hotel managers but also for tourist guides, taxi drivers, staff at eating places, porters etc., as the manner in which they conduct themselves affects the tourist's experience of the country. Important do's and don'ts in terms of a code of ethics need to be inculcated among the service providers.<sup>3</sup>

### **Tourism Promotion Activates Undertaken by Government in India**

Tourism plays an important role in employment generation and economic growth of the country. It is accepted as the potent engine for inclusive social economic progress at universal

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<sup>2</sup>Ravee Chauhan, "Tourism Concepts and Practices", Vista International Publishing House, New Delhi First Edition 2009, p.99.ISBN: 978 81 908605 2 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ravee Chauhan, "Tourism Concepts and Practices", Vista International Publishing House, New Delhi First Edition 2009, p.104.ISBN: 978 81 908605 2 9.

level through its forward and backward linkages and ability to create employment in the economy. The tourism sector has a very high employment potential with approximately 90 jobs creation per Rs. 10 lakhs of investment. There is a high scope for profuse employment generation and related activities in the form of accommodation projects, food-oriented projects, amusement parks and water sports etc.

The tourism sector is one of the largest employment generators in India and inclusive growth of the less-advantaged sections of the society and poverty eradication. The main objective of the tourism policy in India is to position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and harness its direct and multiplier effect on employment and poverty eradication in a sustainable manner by active participation of all segments of the society Apart from Marketing and promotion, the focus of tourism development plans is also on integrated development of tourism infrastructure and facilities through effective partnership with various stakeholders. The role of Government in tourism development has been re- defined from that of a regulator to that of a catalyst.

The year 2015 witnessed a growth of 4.5 % in Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India; this growth is equivalent to the medium growth rate of 4.5 % witnessed in International Tourist Arrivals, globally<sup>1</sup>. FTAs during 2015 were 80.27 lakh as compared to the FTAs of 76.79 lakh during 2014. The Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) from tourism in rupee terms during 2015 were Rs.1,35,193 crore with a growth of 9.6 %. The Ministry of Tourism supported the initiative regarding the implementation of Tourist Visa on Arrival enabled with Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) (renamed as e-Tourist Visa) strongly and committed all support to Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Civil Aviation for implementing the program.

The Government of India launched the e-Tourist Visa on 27.11.2014. During January-December 2015 a total of 4,45,300 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa. 150 countries are eligible for e-tourist visa as on 26.02.2016. This facility is now available in 16 airports as on 26.02.2016. The Government of India, w.e.f November 2015, has also revised the e-Tourist Visa (e-TV) fee in four slabs of 0, US\$ 25, US\$ 48, and US\$ 60. Presently e-TV application fee is US\$ 60 and bank charge is US\$ 2 which is uniform for all the countries. The revision of Visa fee has been done on the principle of reciprocity. Bank charges have also been reduced from US\$ 2 to 2.5 % of the e-TV fee. There is no bank charge for zero visa fees.

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the 24x7 Toll-Free Multi-Lingual Tourist Help Line in 12 International Languages including Hindi and English on 08.02.2016. This service will be available on the existing toll-free number 1800111363 or on a shortcode 1363. This will be

operational 24X 7 (all days) in a year offering a “multi-lingual helpdesk” in the designated languages to provide support service in terms of providing information relating to Travel & Tourism in India to the domestic and International tourists/visitors and to assist the callers with advice on action to be taken during times of distress while travelling in India and if need be to alert the concerned authorities. The languages handled by the contact centers include ten International languages besides English and Hindi, namely Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish. The calls made by tourists (both international and domestic) while in India will be free of charge.

The International Cooperation Division of the Ministry holds consultations and negotiations with other countries for signing of Agreements / Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for bilateral/multilateral cooperation in the field of tourism, organizes Joint Working Group Meetings with other countries and attends Joint Commission Meetings, in coordination with the Ministries of Commerce, Culture, Civil Aviation, External Affairs, Finance, Petroleum, etc. for development and promotion of tourism. India has signed 8 bilateral / tripartite Agreements/ MoUs/ Protocols with other countries to widen the links of friendship and promote cooperation in tourism sector during the Financial Year 2015-16 (up to 31st December 2015).

The Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee on Tourism Sector (IMCCTS) has been reconstituted under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. The terms of reference of the Committee is to facilitate resolution of Inter- Ministerial issues involved in the development of tourism in the country. The members of the Committee are: Chairman, Railway Board, Home Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Secretary, M/o Civil Aviation, Secretary, M/o Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Secretary, M/o Urban Development, Secretary, M/o Culture, Secretary, M/o AYUSH, Secretary, M/o Textiles, Secretary, M/o Road Transport & Highways, Secretary, M/o Information & Broadcasting, Secretary, M/o Development of North Eastern Region, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism is the Member-Convener of the Committee. Meeting of the IMCCTS was held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 under the Chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary. Important Inter-Ministerial issues relating to the development of tourism were discussed in the meeting.

Augmentation of infrastructure is the key to the expansion of tourism sector. The major portion of the Ministry's expenditure on planned schemes goes into the development of quality infrastructure relating to tourism at various tourist destinations and circuits spread around the States/UTs. The Government of India has launched two new schemes; Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD in a Mission Mode. The broad objectives of the Swadesh Darshan

scheme are to develop circuits having tourist potential in a planned and Integrated development of infrastructure in the identified theme based circuits, promote cultural and heritage value of the country, enhance the tourist attractiveness by developing world class infrastructure in the circuit destination, follow community-based development and pro-poor tourism approach, promote local arts, cultural, handicrafts, cuisine etc. Besides objectives under Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme also aims to achieve the objective of integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in a planned, prioritized and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience and harness pilgrimage tourism for its direct and multiplier effects on employment generation and economic development. During 2015-16 the Ministry has sanctioned an amount of Rs 150.77 Crore and Rs.1330.82 crore under the schemes of PRASAD and SWADESH DARSHAN respectively.

The government also provide financial assistance to Central Agencies. The objective is to ensure tourism infrastructure development through Central Financial Assistance of the Ministry by the Central agencies like Archaeological Survey of India, Port Trust of India, ITDC, Ministry of Railways, etc. who own the assets. The Scheme for Products/ Infrastructure Development of Destinations and Circuits (PIDDC) has been delinked from the Union support from the current financial year (2015-16). There is no budgetary support for the scheme for the states; however, a provision of Rs. 20 crores has been made for the UTs only during 2015-16.

In 2015-16, the development of niche tourism is sought to be achieved by taking various steps, such as; constitution of National Medical & Wellness Tourism Board on 5th October 2015, with the Honourable Minister (Tourism) as it's Chairman, constitution of Task Force on Cruise Tourism on 24th November 2015, approval of 08 golf events by India Golf Tourism Committee (IGTC) during the year 2015-16 (till December 2015) and release of an amount of Rs.281.71/-lakh. The Ministry also provided a financial assistance of Rs 84.84 lakhs during 2015-16, till December 2015 to the Medical Tourism Service Providers under MDA scheme.

With a view to bringing in more transparency and accountability, this Ministry has introduced an online system for receiving, processing and conveying/ granting approvals for the hotel project, Hotel classification / reclassification status to functioning hotels and project level approval for a hotel under construction. This online process has also been integrated with a payment gateway.

Ministry of Tourism has set up a Web-based Public Delivery System for recognition of the Travel Trade Service Providers with the objective to ease the process of filling application by the Travel Trade Service Providers seeking recognition from this Ministry and also to bring in transparency in granting the approvals This online process has also been integrated with payment gateway with effect from January 2016.

It has been the endeavour of this Ministry to put in place a system of training and professional education, with necessary infrastructure support, capable of generating manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the tourism and hospitality industry, both quantitatively and qualitatively. As of now, there are 42 Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs), comprising 21 Central IHMs and 21 State IHMs, and 9 Food Craft Institutes (FCIs), which have come up with the support of the Ministry. These institutes were set up as autonomous societies with the specific mandates to impart hospitality education/ conduct training in hospitality skills.

In order to develop and promote tourism in the North Eastern Region, 4th International Tourism Mart was organized from 14th to 16th October 2015 at Gangtok in Sikkim. 52 foreign delegates from 23 countries participated in ITM -2015 and one-to-one business meetings between the tourism service providers from the North Eastern Region and West Bengal and tour operators from overseas and other regions of the country were held on the 16th October 2015 with an aim to establish business contacts between the business fraternity of the region with their counterparts from other regions of the country and other countries with a view to increasing the foreign tourist arrivals in the region.

As of now, there are 42 Institutes of Hotel Management (IHMs), comprising 21 Central IHMs and 21 State IHMs, and 9 Food Craft Institutes (FCIs), which have come up with the support of the Ministry. During the year 2015- 16, in-principle approval has been accorded for the setting up of three new State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHMs) i.e. one each at Ramnagar (Uttarakhand), Jhalawar (Rajasthan) and SawaiMadhopur(Rajasthan) with the Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 16.50 crore. In-principle approval has also been accorded for setting up of two Food Craft Institutes (FCI) at Dholpur and Baran (Rajasthan) with the Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 7.50 crore.

10 days training program has been launched to inculcate appropriate tourism traits and knowledge amongst the trainees to enable them to act / work as Tourist Facilitators (PrayatakMitra). Young men and women so trained act as catalyst/ resource persons in turn for a similar effort. To gradually work towards a tourism-sensitive citizenry for college going

students including those enrolled with NCC & NSS in the age group of 18–28 years. This programme is implemented by IITTM. 59 candidates have been trained till January 31, 2016. A 4 days' sensitization programme has been launched for the existing service providers to eventually achieve an improved tourist specific ambience and a furtherance of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. This programme will cover the sensitization of Boatman, Rickshaw Pullers, Pandas, Porters, Shopkeepers and Street Vendors (in and around Ghats and Kashi temple). This programme is implemented by IITTM. 50 boatmen have been trained till January 31, 2016.

The Ministry participated in events and exhibitions such as; GITB (The Great Indian Travel Bazaar) held from April 19-21, 2015 at Jaipur, Global Exhibition on Tourism (GET) held at PragatiMaidan from 23rd – 25th April 2015 etc. Four social awareness films were released by Ministry of Tourism at a function held in Ashok Hotel on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015 along with the release of 'India Land of Yoga' brochure. State-Centric Food Festival titled 'Bharat Parv' was organised at different locations from 3rd – 15th August 2015. It showcased folk dances and culinary traditions from different states of India. National Tourism Awards Function was organized on 18th September 2015 at VigyanBhawan. Hon'ble President of India gave away the National Tourism Awards at the awards function. Ministry of Tourism was also designated as the nodal Ministry for the event 'Bharat Parv' organized by the Government of India at the Red Fort, Delhi from 26<sup>th</sup> to 31st January 2016, as part of the Republic Day Celebrations.

In-house Quarterly Hindi Journal of the Ministry of Tourism, namely 'Atulya Bharat' has been published beginning from the quarter ending 30th September 2015 onwards with a view to enhance the use of Hindi in the official work and to provide an opportunity to the officials to express their literary and creative skills.

Shri ArunJaitley, Hon'ble Finance Minister laid the foundation stone for a dedicated building for the Ministry of Tourism with the nomenclature as "PanditDeendayalUpadhyayaParyatanBhawan" on 03.09.2015, opposite to Birla Mandir, New Delhi. The building will be constructed by NDMC and is likely to be handed over to the Ministry within two years. A separate Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) has been set up by the Ministry of Tourism from December 2015 for implementation of initiatives of Ministry of Tourism under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan/Campaign Clean India.

The Ministry of Tourism launched a mobile application called SwachhParyatan on 22 February 2016 which will let citizens report unattended garbage piles at various tourist destinations across the country. In the pilot phase, 25 monuments identified as AdarshSmark

by ASI have been taken up. A Nodal officer at each of these 25 monuments is made responsible to ensure clearing of the garbage piles reported. The ASI Nodal officer will update the database on completion of the task so that the system can send an SMS to the complainant that his / her complaint has been attended successfully.

#### Tourism in Madurai

The temple city of Madurai attracts tourists across the globe every year and the number of tourist visiting Madurai is also on the rise. Madurai has got the attraction of many historical, religious places and temples like TirumalaiNayakar Palace, Meenakshi Amman Temple, Maariyyamman Temple, Alagarkovil, PrassannaVenkatesaPerumal Temple, Vaigai Dam, PuduMandapam, etc.,. If one looks at the number of tourists arriving to Madurai and the kind of services rendered and extended by the government, it is no way matching. This is an indication that the governments at different levels-central, state and local has a long way to go, in terms of providing effective tourism services and tourism products at Madurai.

#### Discussions and Conclusion

Tourism plays a significant role in the life of an average individual irrespective of their other status. Besides providing leisure and entertainment the important take away of tourism are making individuals stress free and preparing them for higher work productivity, gaining new experiences, generating income to the economy, creating additional gainful employment in vulnerable sectors. Several factors play an important role in tourism dynamics which includes tourism services on the one hand and tourism requirements on the other hand. In most cases, tourism services are provided by corporates, business organizations, private enterprises and individuals. The level, nature and dimensions of tourism services has to improve in multifold in order to enhance and realize the inbound tourist and to ensure to tourism development.