

Some Aspects of Cultural Tourism of Magadh Division, Bihar



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ABSTRACT

At the threshold of new millennium tourism has emerged as the biggest industry of the future. The growth of international tourism was slow in the first part of the century, rapid in the later part and phenomenal since 1980s. tourism is to- day the world's largest and fastest expanding industry.¹ in India the travel and tourism industry has really come of age [2].

INTRODUCTION

The greatest advantage of tourism is that it is a “smokeless” industry, one that does not threaten the quality of life in the severe ways that industrialization can. It earns foreign exchange without exporting natural resources. The phenomenon of tourism is closely related to the structure, form, use and conservation of the landscape. Geography has an important part to play in the reconciling of tourist activity with other demands upon particular environment.³

ANALYSIS :- Tourism is Travel, Relaxation, a Holiday, an exposure to other culture Though travel or amusement has always been an integral part of tourism, yet another forms of tourism like travel for education, enlightenment, etc. have been very much there particularly among students, intellectuals and elites. In fact, “Grand Tours” to the centres of high culture were meant for acquainting them with important historic sites and emblems of the fine arts. Even in the modern world of science and technology, Indian culture is a living dynamic force. Indian society is like a mighty elephant carrying its massive weight on its four pillar- like legs. It is a living organism, vital in spirit and dynamic in action.⁴

SIGNIFICANCE :- Our temples and centres of religious pilgrimage and tourism are our heritage and give the configuration of India's personality (Mazumdar, D.N.). Actually, temples in India may rightly be reckoned to represent philosophy in brick and stone. One of the greatest services that institutions of pilgrimage (Cultural tourism) has render to India as a whole is that it has impressed upon all people her fundamental

unity in the midst of apparent diversity.⁵ The sacred complex is a uniting agent which brings the people of different classes. Caste etc., on a common saddle and develops national integration.⁶

States of Cultural Tourism :- Cultural tourism has a special place in India because of its past civilization. Among the various motivating factors governing travel to India, "Cultural Tourism" is undoubtedly the most important.⁷

AREA UNDER STUDY :- Magadh Division, presently one of the South Bihar Divisions, consists of five districts viz, Gaya, Nawada, Aurangabad, Jehanabad and Arwal and spans over an area of 12,344 km. and concides with that of old district of Gaya.

THE MAHABODHI TEMPLE, BODH-GAYA

The art heritage of India has been widely studied in terms of its contents, motifs and chronology, to explicate its evolution as well as its various chronological phases and their aesthetic brilliance. The magnificent style off the temple tells the Indian architectural glory.

From the artistic and architectural point of view Bodh-Gaya ranks high in importance. The Mahabodhi Temple is the solesurviving example of what was once a whole architectural genre. It ever had an international influence, through models and plans of it which were carried throughout Asia by pilgrims, and from which copies of it were build The stone railing around the temple is perhaps the earliest example of Buddhist art, and the large number of statues in it of Pala period sculpture make it one of the richest repositories of sculpture from this period.⁸

The first temple at the site where Buddha attained supreme enlightenment was built by King Asoka during the 3rd Century B. C. Chiang Hsia-Pias, a Chinese pilgrim has credited the erection with the name of Asoka.⁹
Inscriptions :- One may observe various inscriptions on the remnants on the pillars of the old jewel-walk shrine, the edges of the upper surface of the coverings-slab of the old Diamond throne, the different parts of the stone railing and the pedestal of an old image of the Buddha still in the Bodhisattva State. Besides, the Bodhi Tree, amongst the other sites of meditation in the precinct of the Temple mention may be made of Bajrasana, Animeshalochana Stupa, chankramana and Raatnagar Chaitya.

Maitrey Project :- It is a proposed project within which at Bodh-Gaya world biggest Buddha idol will be installed. A 128-metre (421 feet) high bronze statue of the future Buddha, Lord Maitreya would be built.

CULTURAL TOURISM :- Bodh- Gaya is a place of international fame both for native and foreign pilgrims as well as tourists. Nearly ten percent of total population of the town on any normal day is comprised of floating population constituting of pilgrims and tourists halting the town, while on special day of fairs and festivals, this percentage increases considerably. The foreign visitors to Bodh-Gaya arrive from various Asian countries viz. Japan, Korea, Combodia, Laos, Vietnam, Burma, China, Sikkim, Nepal, India and Ceylon. The tourists outside Asia are mainly from U.S.A., France, Holland, Austria, British Isles, Australia etc.

Facilities :- Facilities available at Bodh-Gaya are regarding transport-Road ways Vehicles are taxi, auto-rickshaws as well as the popular EKKAS from Gaya to Bodh- Gaya as well as for various monasteries site-seeing. Railways and air services are also available at Gaya and Bodh-Gaya, Spacious DHAMASHALAS and monastery accommodation is also provided.

Hazards :- Factors adversely affecting the influx of Bodh-Gaya tourists are harassed by cheats, masquerading as guides, fake guides; accommodations facilities is inadequate for the tribal folk of the Himalayan region, no provision of luxurious taxis and buses, no tourists home for poor, lack of tourist information lavatory etc.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a sun-rise industry in the new millennium, Governments at state and centre should take proper interest in giving fillip to boost tourism for the regional and national development as well as national integration and international goodwill, brotherhood and mutual appreciation.

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