

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF TOURISM INDUSTRY OF KARNATAKA A PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The tourism is a social and economic phenomena which has become a fast growing global industry. The tourist attraction of Karnataka includes natural scenery, attractive customs and the way of life, wild life sanctuaries, rivers and waterfalls, green mountains, beautiful creation of the man, traditional art and dancing programmes and typical fairs and festivals. In Karnataka, there are more than 257 identified tourist centers, which are located in 27 districts. The main tourist centers that have historical events to be considered as spot of world of heritage are: Halebeedu, Belur, Shravanbelgola, Srirangapatna and Sringeri. Also, the tourist traffic to Karnataka is on steady increase since last three decades.

Key words : tourist potential, tourist centers, foreigners, Karnataka

Tourism is a social and economic phenomena in which spatial movement of people is carried out in any country for various purposes, as it has become a fast growing global industry. The reason for global industrialization of tourism is mainly to maintain a sound mind and body; in the present day scenario, a person fundamentally needs appropriate action and reaction of excitement, relaxation and peace through proper utilization of leisure and recreation. Every spot in the global village may become a tourist point whether a hot desert or the coolest place, because of diversified interest of human beings. Then, why it should not be explored as an important resource.

In addition to economic significance, it has socio-cultural educational and political significance as well. The complex nature of tourism phenomena implies that various academic disciplines are involved in its study and it has become an issue of integrated approach.

In India, tourism is still an untapped market and smokeless industry as well. The country has vast and varied potential, which is still waiting for proper use, meaning it is a scarce sensitive recourse of the sub-continent. Thus, it was indeed a trade phenomenon in the past, but now it has grown into a "Trade" by itself, rather than the most productive industry inducing many activities.

The spatial aspects like locations, spatial interactions within close and open systems are inherent features of tourism and led themselves readily to a base of geographic analysis.

South India projects an irresistible image of beauty to the tourists. Within

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south India, the tourist potential of Karnataka is immense and it can be profitably exploited if it is wisely looked upon. Generally, Karnataka can be called an “archaeological museum” as geographically it offers many types of tourist spots ranging from serene woodlands to mining and industrial complexes or medical tourism. But due to the sudden and improper growth of this sector, it has resulted a spatial imbalance in the form of both positive and negative imprints, which has to be noticed by the spatial scientists because the beauty becomes an enemy to itself and can destroy itself.

In some tourist places of Karnataka, we have left a denuded landscape for generations to come and many precious things have been destroyed by this activity though it is a renewable resource; it has become a ‘sick’ blood with a smart skin because of the degradation of nature by selfish nature of man.

There are more than 257 identified tourist centers in Karnataka which are located in 27 districts within a total geographical area of 1,92,204 sq.km. On an average, each district has not less than 3 tourist centers. The maximum number of tourist places is in Uttarakannada district, which has 27 tourist spots, and in Shimoga district, 25 tourist spots. These two districts have not less than 8-10 types of tourism activities (Location map of study area). Each district has tourist spots depending on the natural phenomena, either serene wood lands or varied culture. Out of the 257 tourist centers, two tourist spots have been considered as the world heritage, namely Magnificent Hampi- the magnificent capital of mighty kingdom of Vijayanagar kingdom, which is located in Bellary district and the second one is Pattadakal and Ihole, once the capital of the early chalukyan dynasty in Bijapur district. Both world heritage sites can be explored in the state of Karnataka.

The major factors which attract tourists to Karnataka are the natural scenery, attractive customs and the way of life, wild life sanctuaries, back waters, rivers and waterfalls, green mountains, beautiful creation of man, traditional art and dancing programmes and typical fairs and festivals.

Some more tourist centers have historical events, which are considered as spots of the world heritage – namely Halebeedu, Belur, Shravanbelgola, Srirangapatna, and Sringeri.

Karnataka state has many sources to make of itself a tourist paradise, which are identified as it follows:

Table no.1

Clearly states that it has varied type of tourism.

S.No.	Types of tourism in Karnataka	
1	Heritage Karnataka	20
2	Wild Karnataka	18
3	Extreme Karnataka	9
4	Romantic Karnataka	9
5	Cascading (Waterfalls) Karnataka	11
6	Artistic Karnataka (Art, dance, folks etc)	
7	Sea side Karnataka (250 kms coastline)	11

8	Divine Karnataka	26
9	Festive Karnataka	12
10	Health Karnataka	9
11	Adventure Karnataka (yana)	12
12	Flora-fauna Karnataka	
13	Education Karnataka	

The state has tourism activities throughout the year depending on the diversified climatic conditions. Table no 2 and graph 1 show that, in 2007, more than 5 lakh foreigners visited Karnataka. January, February, October, November, and December months are the peak months for the visitors. For domestic tourists, January, February, March, November, and December are the peak months. For domestic visitors, school holidays, festival holidays along with religious customs are the main factors of attraction.

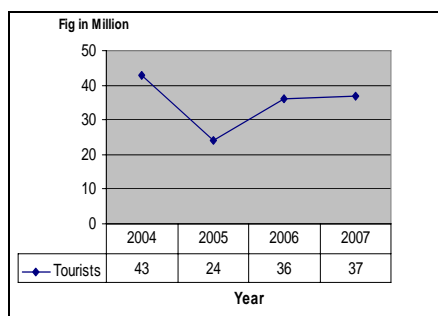


Fig. no 1. Indian Tourist Statistics between 2004 to 2007

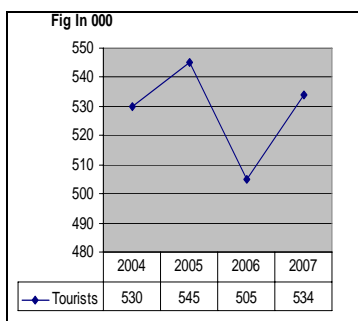


Fig. no 2. Foreigner Tourist Statistics between 2004 to 2007

Tourist traffic to Karnataka is on steady increase since last three decades; the five years arrivals in Karnataka show an upward trend. In 1980, just 23,000 foreigners visited the region and now the number has increased to an extent of more than 5 lakh foreigners per year and more than 3.7 crore of visitors visited different tourist centers of Karnataka.

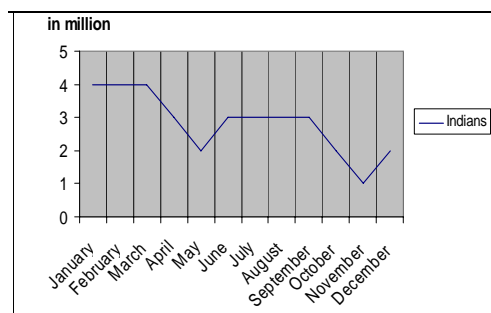


Fig. no 3. Seasonwise Domestic Tourists to Karnataka 2007

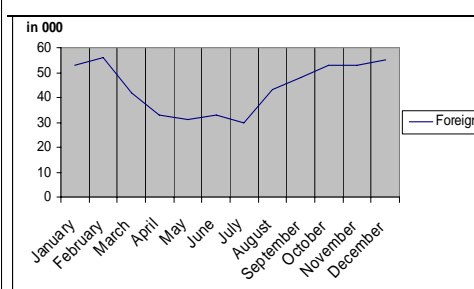


Fig. no 4. Seasonwise Foreign Tourists to Karnataka 2007

This kind of rich resource of tourism has positive and negative impacts because of the anthropogenetic activities.

The positive impact:

Tourism continues to survive and grows as an industry, as well as a trade because of immediate economic benefits it brings. It provides jobs at all levels. Economic methods have been widely used to study the demand and supply of tourism to understand the demand and to forecast the tourists' number. Secondly, the local and regional development has taken place in the form of high standard of life, shopping, entertainment facilities, transport etc. Karnataka is estimated to employ 5.5 lakhs in the travel and tourism sector both directly and indirectly. The tourism Department estimated that Karnataka could generate a total of 28 to 41 Lakh jobs and could play a key role in the regional development and creation of multiple downstream.

The cultural impact has been seen on the local people. The local cowboys also started to talk some foreign languages. Both tourists and locals have cultural exchange by exploiting the views on both sides. The interethnic tourism has proven to be a fruitful means of promoting peace, harmony and goodwill. Great impact has been seen on education even in the remote area because of admixture of foreigner tourists. Thus Eco-cultural resources have become attracting activities in the state.

Tourism in Karnataka has felt the impact of the Hi-tech communications such as fax, STD, ISD, e-mail, mobile phones networking etc. The uneducated persons have become know ledged persons in this activity. This is the effect of modern tourism.

Individual tourism is getting less important and mass tourism is getting much important. This has created a lot of changes in accommodation, hostelling, shopping, traffic and created betterment for both the hosts and the tourists by creating harmony with the local environment.

The transportation system underwent a great regional and economic development in the state, because the state has a diversified landscape and varied climatic conditions. High-Tec has made possible to reach a tourist area where nature's gifts are located.

Tourist facilities have increased to a greater extent especially in the eco-tourism, adventure tourism, surfing, rafting, birds watching. Many more positive aspects have been noticed in health tourism education tourism.

The negative impact:

The negative impact on tourism has already alarmed because of improper utilization of tourism resource. The negative impact refers to pollution – air pollution from vehicles, water pollution, dumping solid waste, sound pollution by vehicles; small petty shop areas have become settlements, which affect a lot especially wild life. Biodiversity degradation imprint have damaged the sensitive ecology especially in the western ghat areas. The anthropogenetic impact has destroyed the nature's gift by misusing this resource. Environmental degradation has taken place especially along the sea beaches, deep forest areas, where biodiversity was important.

No doubt tourism brings lot of economic benefits, which leads to the up gradation of the surrounding areas, but it has the potential to disrupt the traditional, cultural and social structure of the hosting centers. Unwanted and undesirable new things change and destroy the uniqueness of that area. Most of the tourism centers have become centres of prostitution, alcoholism, delinquencies, cheating and theft and the peacefulness of the forest law has been completely destroyed, since man has occupied the habitat of wild nature. The wild nature enters into the man's habitat. The wild animals like elephants, tigers, cheetahs, panthers started to enter the villages for their food. In some localities, there is no place to hide for the wild animals in their own habitat.

Most unplanned tourism brought in wake, price hikes, traffic congestion, scarcity of amenities to the tourists and have become hell centers instead of leisure and pleasure centres.

Suggestions:

1. Carrying capacity of the tourist place must be followed. Thus, it is necessary to obtain prior permission, otherwise peace zones/sensitive ecosystems will become like fairs/weekly market center. For example, Jog falls site registered a record of 40,000 persons/day. Though there is a lot of water during fall, at the observing center, it was no drop water for drinking and for sanitary uses. Krishna Raj Sagar has recorded more than one lakh visitors in a day; it has become a center of cheating, prostitution and alcoholic center.
2. Packaging trip must be done on the basis of micro, meso and macro regions depending on the importance and days to be covered and everybody should do the same. Privatization is alright, but private people should know the importance of tourism.
3. Night driving should not be allowed in the eco-tourism as it disturbs the wild animals by sound, light and pollution. Tigers, deer, wild boars etc. are the worst affected animals, as they suffered numerous accidents.
4. Severe punishment to be put on the smuggles of rare animals, skins of rare animals and birds, killing of wild cats (tiger), cheetah, elephants, deer and flora resources like sandal wood and medicinal plants. The smaller petty shops and smaller hamlets have become the centers for this in the tourist places.
5. Decentralization of tourism activity should take place to avoid the concentration of traffic in few places.
6. Proper exploitation of variety of tourism must be done with proper plans in keeping view to provide good recreation and entertainment.
7. The hostelling and hoteling, shopping and other necessities should not take place in sensitive areas; they can be located at distant places. All these should be done at a particular place with suiting to all purses. This is not a strengthening view, but a country like India must save the gift of nature.
8. Top priority must be given to cleanliness in the tourist centers because most of tourist places have become diseased centers, with respect to food, lodging, drinking water and traffic.

9. Complete awareness and training must be given to the domestic tourists through programmes. Such persons should be allowed to the deep forest areas and sensitive ecosystem zones.
10. Since tourism places are seasonal bases, the proper transport network should be available including airways, let it be a smaller airbus which reduces time, cost, accidents and efforts.
11. The definition of word commission on environment and development [WCED] regarding suitability must be understood and followed in the development of tourism. For example, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

HERITAGE KARNATAKA WORLD HERITAGE OF KARNATAKA

Karnataka has been called as the cradle of stone architecture. The magnificent world heritage sites at Hampi and Pattadttal, the exquisite temples at Belur, Halebidu, Samauathpura, the cave temples of Badami and Aihole and the stately forts, domes and minarets of Bijapur resurrect the state's history and cultural affluence. These peerless wonders are eloquent reminders of a rich heritage.

WILDLIFE – KARNATAKA

Karnataka's flora and wild life are its priceless natural heritage. From the majestic evergreen forests of the western ghats to the scrub jungles of the plains, a wide variety of habitats teem with diverse flora and fauna. Some of them are endemic to the region. Bandipur, Nagarhole and National parks have mammals like tiger, leopard, elephants, gaur, sloth bear, wild dog, striped hyena, sambar, deer, barking deer, mongoose, Loris, bears and black panther.

The reptiles - rat snake, vipers, krait, pythons, flying snakes, cobra, king cobra, as well as a variety of aquatic habitats - crocodiles, birds, variety of fish, water dogs etc.

Birds – more than 250 species of birds have been identified in the state. Important one are stork, heron, kite, falcon, peafowl, wood pecker, sand piper, wild hen, peacock, parrots, snake birds, sun birds, partridges, ducks, owls etc. B.R. Hills, Cauvery wild life sanctuary, Ranganthitun birds' sanctuary kokkare bellur, pelicanvy, kaggaladu, heronry, aushi natural parks and other eight natural and other parks are located in different parts of the state.

EXTREME KARNATAKA

With its unique geographical features, the state provides adventure lovers with every kind of terrain except snow clad mountains. Outdoor activities on land, water, including vast sea coast and sky make it a heaven for adventure sports and other outdoor activities.

ROMANTIC KARNATAKA

The state has its share of several known hill stations. Each has its own unique charm. The Western Ghats hill stations present spectacular views of dense forests, deep valleys and a magnificent sunset.

CASCADING KARNATAKA

Karnataka abounds in a torrent of sparkling water falls, the rivers gush through thick forests in coastal area breaking into streams that meander over hilly tracts to end in a series of dramatic plunging finals throughout the region.

Worth to mention are - Jog falls of Sharawati river – falls at a height of 810 feet, Unchallifalls, Magad falls 650 feet, Hebbe falls – 250, abbey, Iruppu, Kalla falls, Lalguli falls, Satodi falls, Gokak falls and many other.

ARTISTIC-KARNATAKA

Karnataka has a wide range of songs, dances that revolve around hunting, food gathering, etc. The state's rich and vibrant culture is reflected in varied art forms: yakshagana, dolls aata, bhootaradane, nagamandala and so on.

SEA SIDE KARNATAKA

The state is flanked by the soaring Western Ghats in the east and blessed by the blue waters of the Arabian Sea in the west with a 320 kilometers of long coastline dotted with unspoilt beaches, temples, surfing with harbours and ports.

DIVINE KARNATAKA

The state is much famous for its shrines, mosques, churches and jain basadis; architectural wonders hold the key to the states spiritual and historical past. The religions circuits fascinate pilgrim and tourists as the enigma of Indian philosophy unravels in its architecture, religion and cultural tradition.

FESTIVAL KARNATAKA

The fascinating fairs and festivals of Karnataka are a celebration of life in all its infinite variety. Most of them are exclusive to the state and reverberate with colour and gaiety. Every hamlet and village, every towns and city has its own calendar of events to be celebrated like Dussera, Sankramana, Karaga, Hutri, Darga, Christmas, Abhishekam etc.

SHOPPING KARNATAKA

With its shimmering skills, sandal wood, rose wood, ivory carvings, handicrafts, Karnataka is a shoppers' paradise. Karnataka's rich cultural heritage is evident in every product made by skilled and dedicated artesian who are devoted to keeping their art alive.

CULINARY KARNATAKA

The state is blessed with a rich culinary heritage. The state's vast culinary repertoire encompasses the earthy flavours of north Karnataka, the traditional fare of south Karnataka, the spicy dishes of the coastal region and the distinctive kodava cuisine.

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