

HERITAGE TOURISM IN INDIA: COLLABORATION WITH MUSEUMS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

Tourism to sites of cultural and natural significance has existed since the time of the Greek antiquity, as reflected by the Hellenistic world's invention of the Seven Wonders of the World. Recently, 'heritage' has been taken as one of the most important marketing tools to attract the tourists. 'Heritage tourism' is the fastest growing industry throughout the world.

Heritage tourism is important for various reasons; it has a positive economic and social impact, it establishes and strengthens identity, it helps preserve the cultural heritage, with culture as an instrument facilitating harmony and understanding among people.

However, heritage tourism has also a negative impact. It can damage heritage when not well managed. Thus, there is a conflict between tourism and broader community values. Tourism can damage cultural heritage and limits on visitation can damage tourism.

Thus, sustainable development has been taken as sensitive development of

tourism in a region that would protect the social and environmental context for the next generation along with making a viable return on the investment in tourism in the long term.

It is the best way to collaborate with stakeholders who see different aspects of a problem and can constructively explore the problems and solutions that go beyond their own limited vision of what is possible.

Objective

The aim is to investigate the relationship in terms of the common denominators and areas of mutual concern of the tourism industry and museums. The research questions it seeks to answer are:

- What are latest trends in heritage tourism in India?
- How can the existing relationship between museums and tourism be described for strategic marketing?
- Are there possibilities for increased cooperation and a good partnership – and if so, in what areas?

Methodology

To answer these questions, the paper begins by discussing the terminology, both in the field of heritage tourism and museums, where it analyzes and outlines some basic features in both sectors, related to the overall role and vision, social responsibility, the cross-cultural perspectives and the public dimension. It tries to identify where these two fields overlap and what they can learn and mediate to each other, the resource the two operations share and the conception of sustainable development. Finally, the paper discusses the relationship between museums and tourism from a practical perspective by using case studies.

Experimental results

• *Heritage tourism in India*

Tourism in India is the largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment of India. The number of foreign tourist arrivals in the country in 2013 showed an increase of about 4.1% over 2012. During the period January-December 2013, 68.48 lakh (Provisional) tourists visited India against 65.78 lakh in 2012. The domestic tourism continues to be the main contributor to the sector providing much needed flexibility. The domestic tourist visits during the year 2012 are estimated to be 1036 million (Provisional), showing a growth of 19.9% over 2011 (Source: Website of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India).

Heritage tourism encompasses landscapes, natural history, buildings, artifacts, cultural traditions passed on from generation to generation – all in

the form of tourist products. This heritage product can be further distinguished into following groups:

- Tangible immovable i.e. built heritage, like historic buildings and monuments;
- Tangible movable i.e. artifacts,
- Natural heritage, such as gardens, landscapes and National Parks, and
- Intangible heritage like traditions and events.

• *Strategic marketing*

Tourists have needs for goods and services and they are willing to pay for them. The willingness and ability of consumers to fulfill their needs constitute the demands for these goods and services. The tourists (buyers) and tourism industry and museums (sellers) constitute the demand and supply sectors. Thus, heritage tourism in India, tries to give maximum possible benefits and the following steps are given due consideration:

- (i) Identification of heritage assets and destination branding
- (ii) Documentation
- (iii) Conservation and preservation
- (iv) Multidisciplinary task force
- (v) Marketing plan.

To draw new people and money into the country, four components are included in marketing plan – public relations, advertising, graphic materials, and promotions.

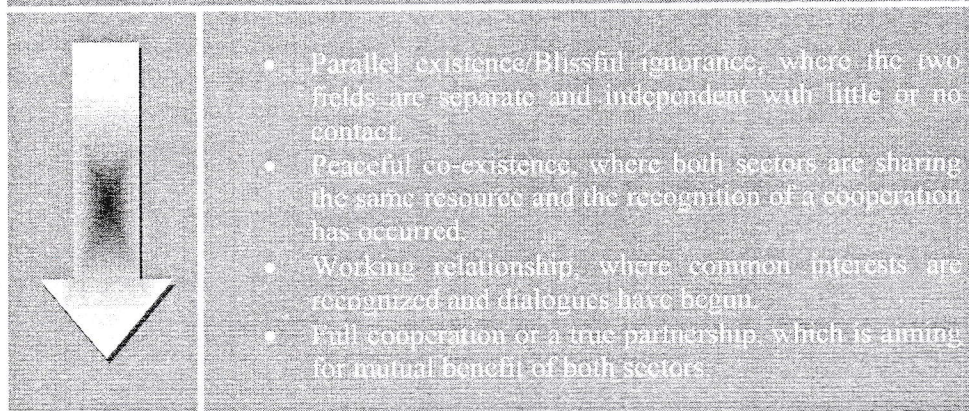
• *Collaborations*

Museums are a part of the already existing cultural infrastructures of the Indian societies and most museums already have certain visitor potential and thus tourist potential. A good

relationship between museums and heritage tourism, which was gradually built on the ideas of sustainable

development, has the potential to serve the two partners as well as the resource, the heritage.

Figure 1: relationship between Indian museums and tourism sector from past to present



• *Sustainable heritage tourism in India*

'Sustainability' i.e. responsible use of the product and its surrounding environment is an effective management of resources for the benefit of future generations. Both tourism industry and museums of India do this through their mutually beneficial partnership, a national strategy with local linkage, integration of public and private sectors, knowledge-based local communities, and greater attention to culture and heritage in the wider Indian tourism context. Thus, they

- ✓ Recognize the importance of heritage places
- ✓ Look after heritage places
- ✓ Develop mutually beneficial partnerships
- ✓ Incorporate heritage issues into business planning
- ✓ Invest in people and place

- ✓ Market and promote products responsibly
- ✓ Provide high quality visitor experiences
- ✓ Respect indigenous rights and obligations

Conclusion

In this paper, the relationship between museums and heritage tourism from both theoretical and practical perspectives is discussed. Though the objectives and mandate of these two sectors are dissimilar, it is between peaceful cooperation and a working relationship. Heritage tourism and museums are certainly different operation, but there are certain issues they hold in common i.e. certain social obligations or responsibilities, regarding increased cultural accessibility and understanding – and cross-cultural communication. The resource that they share is the 'heritage' – and a sustainable and

responsible use of it is of utmost importance for both of them. Tourism tends to see the resource from the users perspective, while museums represent the conservation aspect. The overall challenge is to find the balance between using and conserving the resource – and, the platform where these two fields meet is related to the conception of sustainable development of the heritage.

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