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Factors Responsible For Stagnancy of the Aspects of Tourism in Tripura

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Abstract

Although the state has a great potential for tourist attraction like other states of India, such as, Rajasthan, Banaras, Orissa, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim and so on, yet the state Tripura shares' certainly negligible tourist both from domestic as well as from international. The Indian government is also responsible for it up to certain extent. They followed the apartheid policy towards North-East India especially Tripura, as they considered Tripura lies in one of the remotest area and a landlocked land. So, they ignored this state completely and to a reasonable extent, the geographical location of the state can be blamed for it. But this does not mean that people did not visit the place, though they visit the place for various reason for example for pilgrimage, trade and as a favourite tourist spots but their percentage is far lower than the South Indian and North Indian places and the numbers of factors are responsible for stagnancy of the aspects of tourism such as insurgency problem, though the problem was overcome yet it was not highlighted by the media, creation of East Pakistan etc. If these problems are taken into consideration then the state will definitely become a favourite spot for tourism as well as for pilgrimage for both native and foreigners.

Objectives: This work has been successfully able to attain the below mentioned objectives in a great way.

- Analyzing the reason for the stagnancy of tourism in the state.
- Highlighting the various cultural tourist spots in the state.
- Finally highlighting the future prospect of tourism as a business in the state.

Methodology: Secondary sources have been mainly taken into consideration for making a deep study on the said topic. Mainly books written on tourism in the north east as well as history of Tripura - its people and religion along with some articles and writings of the distinguished scholars have been considered.

Discussion and Findings: Covering mostly the forest-covered areas they are isolated from rest of India except through the Siliguri Corridor (West Bengal) – a slender and vulnerable corridor which is flanked by many alien territories. This difficult accessibility to this region also leads to a great hurdle towards the development of the state. Moreover, the tribal

people who inhabited the region were far from being educated and civilized. Another reason for not flourishing tourism as a trade in the state is because of the role of media. Media has a great role or the easiest way to make general awareness in any issue. Even in the Indian TV Serials and films, when a multi-cultural community is portrayed, the actors in their act represent all the cultures of India except those of North-eastern India (seven sisters state). This is one of the major causes for not being familiar of this region with the people of mainland. It is true, that once this region faced the problem of insurgency and media also highlighted it by making it a great issue but they did not highlighted how the insurgency was overcome. And the fear of terrorism is still in the mind of the people which act as a great barrier for growth of tourism. When I myself visited "Unakoti" people asked me not to visit the place but I visited. So, this type of psychology is also a great hurdle for the development of tourism and a change is need.

Moreover, the partition of India (East Pakistan) also greatly hampered the development of the state not only in the field of tourism but also in the field of economy too.

Again in the field of education we see the negligence of the state. In Social science or History subject hardly anything mentioned about the state though the state has a rich cultural heritage such as, Neermahal, Ujjayanta Palace, Kunjaban Palace, Unakoti, Pilak, Boxnagar, Matabari temple, Bhubaneswari temple etc. this cultural heritage can be compared with Taj Mahal, Konark temple, Ajanta and Ellora caves etc. were included in the syllabi and not about Tripura. So, in the light of absence of popularity the state in spite of having rich cultural heritage can't attract the people for tourism.

Unfortunately, despite its comparative advantage in this area, tourism is not perceived as an important economic activity. The first task of the governments should be to create awareness about the place of tourism in general and of sustainable tourism in particular, in the socio-economic planning of the region. But such awareness creation efforts can start only when the governments themselves are convinced of tourism's importance and provide it due priority in the planning process. Most of tourism planning in the region appears to be ad hoc. It is essential to move away from such an ad hoc approach to draw up definite plans of action, charting out the future directions clearly. Every state must bring out a pragmatic tourism policy, not couched in general terms but clearly defining an implemental action plan. It should indicate the government's commitment to sustainable tourism, the place assigned to tourism in broad development planning, the role of government and other key players. The policy should identify the organizational pattern to implement the policy and a system of monitoring and accountability.

Though the percentage of tourist is increasing day by day but it is negligible in comparison to the other states of India because of poor means of communication. As the state surrounded by Bangladesh, the only road which connect Tripura with rest of India is NH-44 that runs between Silchar and Agartala via Badarpur. In the chapter it discusses how to overcome this problem. The different cultural tourist centre such as, Matabari temple, Kasbari temple, Laxmi-Narayan temple, Bhubaneswari temple etc. convey the impression that they were flourished under the strong Royal patronage. Although the state being mostly

a hilly territory, the major portion of the population of state resides in the plains. It is one of the most ancient of India's princely states. Within its small geographical area, Tripura offers plenty of attraction in the form of magnificent Palaces such as Ujjayanta palace and Kunjaban palace and Neermahal, splendid rock-cut carvings and stone images, important temples of Hindus and including the popular Mata Tripureswari temple (the presiding deity) at Udaipur, vast natural as well as artificial lakes namely Dumboor lake, Rudrasagar, Jagannath Dighi etc. Udaipur, Jampui hill (a beautiful station) bordering Mizoram, wild life sanctuaries at Sepahijala, Gomti, Rowa and Trishna.

The Royal Dynasty, which ruled the state for 517 years under 184 kings, had been known for their love and passion for art and culture, a reflection of which could be seen in the rock-cut carvings and stone images which belongs to seventh century, if not earlier. So, the state bears a long history of changing capitals, firstly, the earliest capital of Tripura was Rangamati, it was renamed as Udaipur by king Uday Manikya. Upto 1760 A.D. Udaipur was the capital of Tripura. Again during the reign of Maharaja Krishna Manikya, the capital of Tripura was shifted to Old Agartala. Once again the capital of Tripura was shifted from Old Agartala to New Agartala (present Agartala) during the reign of Maharaja Krishna Kishore Manikya in 1844 A.D. The Manikya Dynasty ruled the kingdom for more than 500 years till the rule of the last Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya Bahadur. When India got her Independence on 15th August 1947 the Regent Maharani Kanchanprabha Devi signed the Tripura Merger Agreement on 9th September 1949 and accordingly Tripura was merged with India Union on 15th October 1949 and was made a Union Territory on 1st July 1963. It became a full-fledged Indian State on 21st January, 1972.

Tripura is bequeathed with immense natural wealth and cultural richness no doubt a melting pot of ethnic diversity but the Royal family members also played a great role to make the state rich in culture and tradition. Rulers like Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya (1862-96) under whom the modern period of Tripura was begun is considered because he was a great patron of art, literature and music. Not only these he also worked for the social upliftment of the people by abolishing Slavery and Sati systems from Tripura in 1877 and 1889 respectively. Again, it is he who first encourages Guru Rabindranath Tagore as a young poet and appreciates his work for 'Bhagna Hirday'. He was a great painter and photographer.

Again, Radha Kishore Manikya, son and successor of Maharaja Bir Chandra Manikya, took great interest in the field of development of the education of his subjects. He established a College as well as a Technical School at Agaratala which gave impetus to the development of cottage industries and handicrafts. He was a great lover of Bengali language and literature and had friendship with the enlightened persons like Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadish Candra Bose, Rashbehari Ghosh, Jatindramohan Thakur, Naredranarayan Bhup, Jatindranath Roy and Taraknath Palit. It was during his tenure that Tripura's cultural history saw the pristine glory in wide and diversified field. He was succeeded by his son Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya in 1909.

Maharaja Birendra Kishore Manikya was also a great patron of art and literature like his father and also had a great regard for Rabindranath Tagore. He even continued the annual grant to Shantiniketan sanctioned by his father. We can estimate his work in the words of Historian Apurva Chandra Bhattacharjee, “a great philosopher, a thinker and found great pleasure in the cultivation and culture of arts”. He was a great artist and skilled painter. Unfortunately he was died on 1923 and was succeeded by Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya.

The new Maharaja was a benevolent and enlightened ruler who cared much for all-round development of the State. He founded a Buddhist temple at Agartala known as ‘Venuvan Vihar’. He built Neermahal, on the island in the centre of the lake Rudrasagar, which bears as one of the finest specimens of architecture of Tripura. He himself composed many songs and also wrote a historical act ‘Jayabati’. He visited many places before the outbreak of Second World War and met with great rulers such as Hitler, Mussolini etc. and gained valuable experience in administration. He planned to develop Tripura on a modern footing i.e. to make it mini U.K. and started building Agartala as a model town. Before his death on 17th May 1947, he decided to join Tripura to the Indian Union. According to his wish Maharani Kanchanprabha Devi signed the Tripura Merger Agreement and Tripura joined the Indian union and became a Part- C as already mentioned earlier.

Thus through out the study it is found that though the erstwhile royal family was prominent in the state and they are enthusiasts about art and culture but, unfortunately, they hardly took any measures to preserve the precious rock carvings and stone images which have left by our ancestors as a legacy. This negligence may be due to the lack of sufficient fund as well as skilled hands. Not just the rock-carvings, the Udaipur palace too is in need of immediate attention.

Finally, we can say that tourism is not limited to trip or visit to pilgrimage centers only or for pleasures. Its scope is very wide, it is a multi-dimensional activity and it covers a large number of economic activities. It is basically found that every domestic tourist creates employment for three to four persons and every foreign tourist creates seven to eight persons. It was also estimated that every million rupees invested in tourism provides 47.9 jobs directly along with many other indirect jobs because it is believed that generally both foreign and domestic tourists, visit various places in search of specialties, which covers variety of things, such as natural beauty, architecture, peace of mind, fulfillment of religious places, new and variety of cuisine, culture of the people and thrilling adventure. In the midst so many demands, tourists make certain usual demands such as clean, hygienic and comfortable accommodation, good transport and communication facilities, trained tourist guides, decent shops particularly catering to ethnic art, entertainment representing cultural heritage of the region etc.

If the Tripura state Government provide all this facilities for the development of the tourism then surely Tripura within twenty years receive more tourist than the Singapore and Bangkok as well as Northern Indian and South Indian States.

Conclusion: In conclusion, it can be said that although Tripura lies in one of the remotest area and a landlocked state. Covering mostly the forest-covered areas they are isolated from rest of India except through the Siliguri Corridor. Yet it has a great potential for tourism owing to its richness in exotic beauty spots with so many historical and antique places like Neermahal, Ujjayanta Palace, Unakoti, Pilak, Kunjaban Palace and so on.

But if media like T.V., Films, Newspaper etc. can display the true picture of Tripura like South India and North India then Tripura will counted as a favourite spot & destination not only for the native people but also for foreigners.

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