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Adventure tourism in India

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Abstract

Adventure Tourism is mainly seen as thrilling activities tourism such as mountaineering, trekking, sailing, white water rafting, angling, ballooning, parachuting and so on. Adventure Tourism is becoming quite a rage with the younger generations, who wants to venture into and experience the unknown adventure world. In this paper an attempt has been made to define the adventure tourism in simple way, also attempt has been made to discuss adventure tourism in India, its scope and govt. efforts to boost this sector of tourism in India.

Keywords: Rafting, Paragliding, Parasailing, Zorbing, Camel Safari, Elephant Safari, Mountaineering, Trekking, Angling.

1. Introduction

Adventure tourism is a type of niche tourism involving exploration or travel to remote areas, where the traveller should expect the unexpected. Adventure tourism is rapidly growing in popularity as tourists seek unusual holidays, different from the typical beach vacations. Mountaineering expeditions, trekking, bungee jumping, sea surfing, sky diving, paragliding, parasailing, ballooning, rafting and rock climbing are frequently cited as an examples of adventure tourism. Adventure travel is a type of tourism, involving exploration or travel with perceived and possible actual risk, and potentially requiring specialized skills involving physical exertion. Even though, it is not certain how adventure tourism began, merchants are considered to be the first adventure travellers. For example, North America was discovered by Erickson, and America by Columbus, and India was found by Vasco Da Gama. That was during a time when modernization didn't become a regular part of your lives.



Source: Adventure Tourism Market Study

Adventure traveling of today is considered to have started around 30 years ago when people from around the world begin exploration of the Himalayan ranges in Nepal. In fact, they were nothing more than wanderers and created the new-age form of adventure traveling. They explored Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bali, Algeria, the Nile and the Alps. Even though others have had been moving around the world, people in India took to adventure traveling in recent times. While there was a steady rise in this form of traveling, India has now emerged amongst the leading 10 adventure tourism destinations in the world. Adventure tourism has grown in recent decades, as tourists seek different kinds of vacations, but measurement of market size and growth is hampered by the lack of a clear operational definition. According to the U.S. based Adventure Travel Trade Association, adventure travel may be any tourist activity, including two of the following three components: a physical activity, a cultural exchange or interaction and engagement with nature. Adventure tourists

may be motivated to achieve mental states characterized as rush or flow, resulting from stepping outside of their comfort zone. This may be from experiencing culture shock or through the performance of acts that require significant effort and involve some degree of risk (real or perceived) and/or physical danger (See extreme sports). This may include activities such as mountaineering, trekking, bungee jumping, mountain biking, canoeing, rafting, zip-lining, paragliding, and rock climbing. Some obscure forms of adventure travel include disaster and ghetto tourism. Other rising forms of adventure travel include social and jungle tourism. Access to inexpensive consumer technology, with respect to Global Positioning Systems, flash packing, social networking and photography, have increased the worldwide interest in adventure travel. The interest in independent adventure travel has also increased as more specialist travel websites emerge offering previously niche locations and sports.



Adventure Tourism in India:

The tourism industry in India has emerged as the largest sector in the service industry as it contributes over 6.2% of

its GDP. In addition, it provides jobs to more than 8.7% of the employed people in the country. Every year, the number of tourists making to India grows by over 5 million. In

addition to the foreign visitors, there are more than 525

million local tourists in the country.



The overall size of the Indian tourism industry is around \$100 billion and it is expected that it would grow to over \$275 billion in the next decade. The Ministry of Tourism can be credited for this huge success rate because it is aggressively engaged in promoting the industry. It was in order to promote tourism in the country that the Incredible India program was started. The main tagline of this program, “Atithi Devo Bhava” compares guests to God.

However, the tourism industry in India is not as beautiful as it may appear on the top. The insufficient number of available hotel rooms, pushes India behind several other countries. It was only a year ago when the country had around 25,000 hotel rooms for its tourists. The next reason for tourism to fall behind is with regard to the complex process of getting a visa into the country. Because the airports in the country are crowded, it is not taken well by

foreign visitors. However, it is still expected that the tourism industry is going to grow in the near future.



The current year witness dramatic drop in global tourism in different parts of the world. Contrary to the trend, the Indian travel and tourism industry continues to flourish against all odds. The two main reasons attributed to this end are the exemption of the industry from service tax and the discontinuation of the fringe benefit tax. This further led to the development of deluxe unrestrained tourism destinations such as the Backwaters of Kerala and the Golden Triangle Tours that became more affordable for tourists from different parts of the world. It has become such a popular tourism destination that the British have voted it as among the top 10 tourism destinations of the world. The tourists coming to India are thrilled by what they come across here. There is hardly any other country on the planet that is as varied in terms of culture, geography and weather conditions. The moment a tourist gets out of a sophisticated Indian airport, he/she would experience crowded streets, buzzing with horns, cows moving around freely and much more. Interestingly, it is this contrasting effect that is so much cherished by the tourist coming to this country. The people are supporting, the culture is full of colours, there are millions of religious places, rivers, plains, mountains and the ancient tradition of yoga. All

combine together to make India one enchanting tourism destination. The leading adventurous activities available in India include:

Camel Safari:

A Camel Safari in the Thar Desert is one of the most famous adventure holiday activities in Asia. A safari would give you the chance to explore camel treks, including the ones that pass across the sand dunes in Jaisalmer.

Mountaineering:

Mountaineering is highly popular in India because of its Himalayan ranges, the highest mountain range in the world. The Himalayas offer ideal locations for rappelling and rock climbing, and the valleys and gorges are thrilling and offer higher levels of challenges. Those who want to enjoy mountaineering would also like to explore new activities like Jeep Safaris and biking trips at higher altitudes.

Scuba Diving:

India has an extremely long coastline that has helped scuba diving to become a highly sought after adventure sport. The waters of Goa, Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar

Islands make the perfect place for scuba diving and snorkelling.

Elephant Safari:

India is home to the Asian tiger and elephant. There are a large number of tiger reserves and national parks that make elephant safari a leading adventure activity in the country. You can enjoy this adventure in the Amber Fort in Jaipur and watch tigers from the safe height of sitting on elephant back.

River Rafting Adventure:

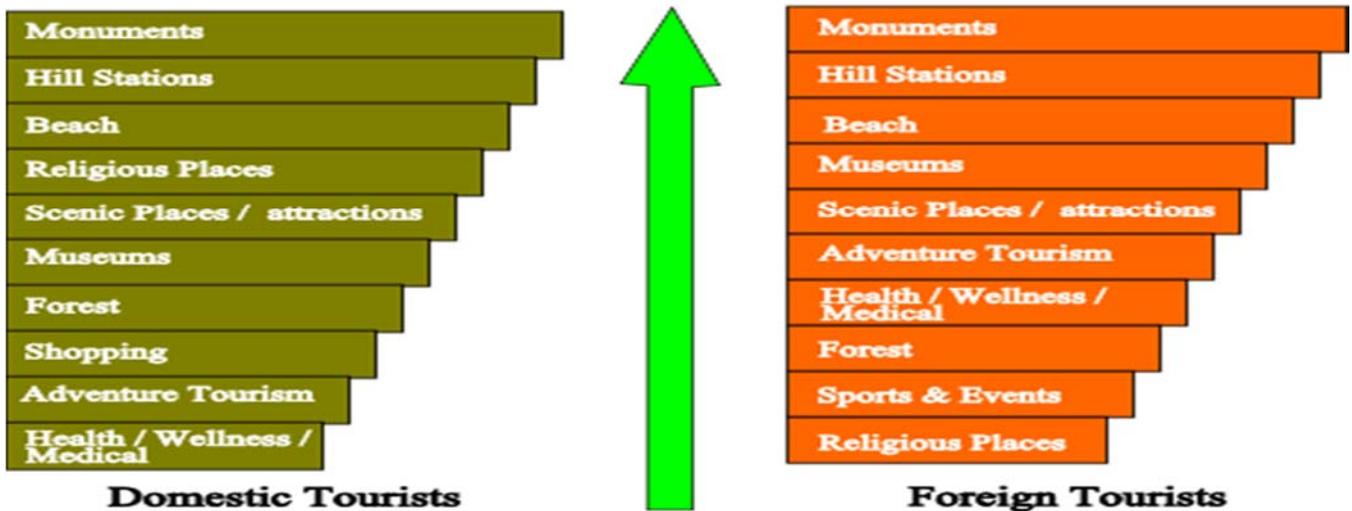
The large rivers of the country including the Brahmaputra, Ganges, Yamuna and the Kali have aggressive rapids that help tourists to enjoy thrilling river rafting experiences. For an adventure lover, India offers you everything to help you

quench your thirst for adventure. The National Institute of Water Sports, another organisation of Ministry of Tourism based in Goa, is getting a new building and facilities upgraded for training in water sports activities.

Skiing:

The abundance of mountains and snow during the winters means that skiing has become one of the most thrilling adventure sport pursued by people from all ages. There are many skiing destinations in India including Gulmarg, Alchi etc. The Indian Institute of Skiing & Mountaineering has been made fully operational in Gulmarg from January 2009. This institute now has its own building and all modern equipment and training facilities for adventure sports. Various adventure courses have been started and are being successfully run by this institute.

Top 10 preferred Indian tourism attractions



Steps Taken By Govt. To Promote Adventure Tourism In India:

As per the policy for the diversification of tourism product of India, special attention is being given for the development of Adventure Tourism in the country. The Ministry of Tourism has also issued Guidelines for Approval of Adventure Tour Operators, which is a voluntary scheme, open to all bonafide adventure tour operators.

The Ministry of Tourism has also formulated a set of guidelines on Safety and Quality Norms on Adventure Tourism as BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ADVENTURE TOURISM ACTIVITIES. These guidelines cover Land, Air and Water based activities which include mountaineering, trekking hand gliding, paragliding, bungee jumping and river rafting.

Central Financial Assistance is being extended to various State Governments/ Union Territory Administration for development of Tourism Infrastructure in destinations including Adventure Tourism destinations these include facilities for trekking, rock climbing, mountaineering, aero-sports, winter/ water related sports, trekker huts, wildlife viewing facilities etc. Financial assistance for purchase of water sports equipment consisting of kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, fibre glass boats, hovercrafts, water scooters, etc. are also provided to State Governments.

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institute now has its own building and all modern equipment and training facilities for adventure sports. Various adventure courses have been started and are being successfully run by this institute.

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The Ministry is working with the Indian Mountaineering Federation and Adventure Tour Operators Association of India to explore positioning India as an Adventure Destination.

Ministry of Tourism has been following up with concerned related Central Ministries with regard to facilitation for development of adventure tourism. As an outcome, the Government of India has given security clearance for opening of 104 additional peaks in Jammu and Kashmir (Leh Area) subject to stipulations and clearances form State Govt., Home Ministry and other concerned agencies. The opening of the additional peaks will help in positioning the Indian Himalayas as Adventure tourism destination.

Scope of Adventure Tourism in India:

India, which is blessed with magnificent geographical and natural locations, is the wonderful location for the adventures activities for the tourists. There are plenty of adventures destinations and landscape locations, which are enough to provide an opportunity to engage in adventures

activities in India. Here are varieties of locations like landscape, sea connected area, mountains and adventure with river, which attracts tourists and visitors for an adventures tour in India. These hot spots like Trekking, Camel Safari, White water Rafting, Wild life Safari, Skiing, Mountaineering etc. are one of the most preferred destinations in the world for its unique specialty and locations.

It is noted that India has a vast geographical richness, which consists of every Types of adventures activities in itself. Whether it is Mountaineering, Trekking, Paragliding etc., there a number of destinations located here.

If you are interested in adventures like Forest safari then there are lot of destinations, which are enough to pacify your eagerness. Camel Safari, Jeep Safari is the special kind of adventures activities, which can be achieved in the many Wildlife sanctuaries and Wildlife National Parks in India.

Mountain Biking is another adventures activity, which enchants visitors and in India. Leh and Ladakh Region provide a glorious site for the same where one can experience the adventures of biking here.

Adventure Scuba Diving: To go inside the sea and know about the separate life of creatures is also special kind of experience for tourists. India provides glorious destinations, which are full of sea, related life style of various creatures.

White water River Rafting which also enchants the tourists who like to flow against the wave of water with full of risks and danger. In India there are many sites, which provide a glorious opportunity for White Water River rafting in Rishikesh, Zanskar River, Alaknanda River, Brahmaputra River and many more these rafting destinations.

Conclusion:

Adventure Tourism holds lot of potential and can boost the Tourism Industry by providing additional product to the tourists who want something exciting and adventurous. The Government and as well as entrepreneurs should work in direction to promote and encourage this segment of tourism which has tremendous potential to fuel our economy.

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