

World Class Tourism Infrastructure The Key to Enhancing Tourism Opportunities

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Picture Courtesy: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Before and after (Sanhit Sarovar, Kurukshetra, Haryana). Tourism initiatives and adequate inputs of infrastructure to conserve the environment of the tourist destination enhance the surroundings as well, thereby developing 'cultural capital' of heritage sites.

Need to take strong initiatives for infrastructure development as a way to forward the Tourism Industry.

NEED FOR INVESTMENT IN THE TOURISM SECTOR

The tourism sector, if effectively promoted, can act as a catalyst for furthering a country's economic growth in view of its wide ranging effects to linkage and multiple impacts¹. The sector has a vast employment potential, both direct and indirect. It not only has the capability and the ca-

capacity to take the country's economy ahead but also sustain it for times to come. For example, its contribution to India's Gross Domestic Product has increased from 5.83% to 6.11 % during the period 2002-03 to 2007-08. It is worthwhile to note that in spite of the rise in world crude oil price and global financial meltdown; tourism in India has grown steadily and has witnessed great buoyancy in the last few

years both internationally and within the domestic tourism sector².

The growth of the tourism industry can be attributed largely to two main reasons—an upwardly mobile middle class seeking leisure facilities and diversified avenues of tourism infrastructure which offer newer recreational possibilities. Besides, ecotourism, rural tourism as well as health tourism are some of the emerging new areas in tourism today. Tourism and hospitality sectors contribute six percent of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of our country which is substantial and certainly demands streamlining our infrastructure facilities. The need of the times is to bring about comprehensive development of infrastructure which includes all weather roads, clean drinking water, sanitation, cleanliness, hygiene, optimum lighting, landscape, signage and adequate maintenance of tourism destinations and tourism circuits. As a tradeoff, one finds that development in tourism sector can contribute significantly to the development of urban basic services and thereby improve the quality of life in all our cities, irrespective of city size, geographical or other importance. Such large scale development will ultimately show an increase in GDP again as the health of our cities grows. So there is all the more reason to invest in the tourism sector. This paper documents the initiatives taken up by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, to develop a vocabulary for 'World Class Infrastructure', delineate generic guidelines for state governments to adopt towards developing tourist infrastructure at tourist destinations and tourist circuits as well as provide CFA (Central Financial Assistance) to State Governments and Union Territories for materialising the same¹.

BACKGROUND TO THE CONCEPT OF THE WORLD CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

"World Class Infrastructure", as a new concept can be decoded in a variety of ways. It has a varied meaning and caters differently to different segments as well as typologies of users/clients. Let us first examine what constitutes or outlines this concept of World Class Infrastructure. Foremost, there is always an *overriding quality* which distinguishes an infrastructure to be labelled as world class¹. To be of international standard and be designated world class, these prerequisite qualities would serve as a common thread which must have compliance so that an infrastructure can fall within the realm of World Class Infrastructure. Secondly, World class tourism infrastructure facilities should not be limited to cater to select cities like Delhi but also be equally applicable to equally important tourism sites in far flung areas of the country. Thirdly, coordination and dovetailing with ministries of Urban Development, Civil Aviation, Surface Transport and other related ministries is another prerequisite in the development of tourism infrastructure².

Experts and stakeholders in the tourism sector need to develop world class tourism infrastructure for not only placing India's tourism industry on the world tourism map, but also consolidating its future there. Efforts are being made by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, with a genuine desire to upgrade tourism infrastructure throughout the country, by providing techno financial assistance to state parties keen to develop tourism infrastructure in the state and within interstate jurisdictions².

India, besides being the fourth largest economy of the world, has diverse geographical and cultural areas

which require site and region specific infrastructure and often special inputs from tourism managers and technical experts.

SYNERGIC COORDINATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

As one of the important initiatives of the Ministry of Tourism, it was opted to take up synergic coordination with the State Governments through a series of regional meetings followed by a national workshop on defining the concept of World Class Infrastructure. In order to ensure that development of tourism infrastructure takes place in an integrated way and inter-state bottlenecks are removed, four inter-state regional conferences were proposed. The deliberations and outcomes of these events would lead to the development of generic guidelines, which could be issued to state governments. The States and Union Territories would, on their part, develop the skeletal framework of these guidelines into more detailed and location specific institutional mechanisms for creation of tourism infrastructure. In short, in the future, areas requiring special attention would be identified, and datum levels for all infrastructure development would have to be adhered to, compliance to which would raise the overall tourism infrastructure (and therefore urban infrastructure) of the country. The question that continuously emerged in all the debates was how to classify and then quantify *World Class Infrastructure* which is location specific and climatically ameliorative?

INITIATIVES TAKEN

So far, 29 mega projects have been identified by the Ministry of Tourism. 20 mega projects have been sanctioned out of which 14 new mega projects were sanctioned in the year 2008-09. The Ministry of Tourism has taken a



Before and after (Red Fort, New Delhi). Management of tourism destinations and circuits have a deep reliance and relationship to cleanliness and maintenance drives which must have strict enforcement and high periodicity.



policy initiative to develop the tourist destinations/circuits of national importance in a holistic and integrated manner. The objective is to ensure that the infrastructure of these mega destinations/circuits is developed to the extent that at present visitors get a satisfying and memorable experience and it can cater to the future tourist inflows also. The infrastructure within these mega projects poses a great challenge as each project is heavily capital intensive and therefore must be justified tangibly within the realm of World Class Infrastructure. Therefore, investigation and critical enquiry has been the hallmark of the series of meetings and workshops that followed.

The first inter-state regional conference of the Tourism Ministers of the North and Central States organised by the Ministry of Tourism was held on 18th August, 2009 at New Delhi. The objective was to give a serious thought to issues concerning tourism and problems that specifically pertain to the

regions of these states. The aim was to ensure holistic and integrated tourism development in close cooperation and coordination with the states. Focus on region wise issues would bring better results and also have an impact on other regions. Following this, the Ministry of Tourism held a workshop on World-Class Tourism Infrastructure on 19th August, 2009. The objective of the workshop was to develop guidelines for World Class Tourism Infrastructure in synergy with architects, state engineering organisations, tourism managers and other consultants. The event served as a capacity building workshop which was focused to sensitise the various stakeholders of the tourism industry towards the emerging trends in world class tourism. The objective was to initiate dialogue and debate on the perceived and emerging demands of world class tourism today. The participants in the workshop were heads of the Engineering Departments of the implementing agencies in States/

Union Territories and the chief architect associated with implementation, officers from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and resources persons from INTACH (Indian National trust for Art and Cultural Heritage), ADB(Asian Development Bank) , JBIC (Japan Bank of International Cooperation), CPWD (Central Public Works Department), RITES (Rail India Technical and Economic Services), NBCC (National Building Construction Company), HUDCO (Housing and Urban Development Corporation) and ITDC (Indian Tourism Development Corporation). Four simultaneous Technical Sessions were held on the following themes. The rationale behind these themes is detailed below. During the deliberations that were held to develop the structure of these workshops, the parameters/ areas which were significant to the 'image value', concepts of sustainability, green architecture and climate change



Picture Courtesy: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

vis a vis a tourism site or circuit were listed and broadly categorised under the following four heads.

- a) Urban Civic Amenities** - It was unanimously voiced that the level and quality of urban civic amenities contributed tremendously on the image value and thereby the tourism traffic of a tourist destination or tourist circuit.
- b) Built Heritage** – It was widely discussed that maintenance and management of existing building stock and its conservation is the key to development of tourism infrastructure. Continuous maintenance, refurbishment and adaptive reuse may be seen as cost-effective means to enhance the tourism potential, rather than allowing deterioration to set in.
- c) Climate Responsive Architecture** - The various stakeholders felt that the diversity of tourism sites

needed infrastructure commensurate to the local climate and to be sustainable (energy crunch and water scarcity being major criteria) through the use of locally available appropriate technology as far as possible; and

- d) Urban Landscape** – utilisation of native landscape species, tree cover and floorscape is to be encouraged as it would not necessitate high maintenance or put a cap on the already discernible energy resource crunch or water shortage which we are facing. This thus became the fourth significant head for discussion.

After detailed deliberations, separate recommendations were made for each of these categories, which after careful moderation were circulated as guidelines to the states by the Secretary Tourism. These would form the basis of any further tourism development

project in State/UT Administrations. Secondly this method would bring about parity within the infrastructure generated for tourism traffic *uniformly* at the national level with strict compliance to quality and level of service. Such concerted efforts did not find place in earlier practices within the Ministry of Tourism. Another unique recommendation suggested that as far as possible, each State/UT should employ architects, including conservation and landscape architects following codal formalities and a (2%) two per cent of the central financial assistance would be dedicated to the expert's consultation fee. A general consensus also emerged that:

- i) State/UT Administration should, as far as possible, employ architects, including conservation and landscape architects following codal formalities. This trend is path breaking as it reiterates the importance of involving trained manpower at the inception of a tourism project.
- ii) Efforts should be made by the State/UT Administration to have a single window clearance for tourism related projects.
- iii) While formulating the schemes under mega destinations projects/circuits by the States/UTs, attempts should be made to bring convergence with the JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission).

FORMULATION OF GUIDELINES TO STREAMLINE RESULTS

A detailed explanation of the guidelines issued to state parties is as follows:

a) URBAN CIVIC AMENITIES

1. States should create all weather circulation networks and connectivity including creation of barrier free environments in and around tourist destinations for all users. This



Before and after (Beach Resort Complex, Mamallapuram). Tourist destinations must be serviced through all weather roads and maintained to world class infrastructure standards. This would enhance the tourism potential of our diverse and even remotely located tourist destinations



is one of the primary concerns of this theme, because unless accessibility to tourism destinations is not enhanced, maintained and made available to users, it remains under-utilized. Secondly, accessibility in Tourism Infrastructure created to international standards must cater to all sections of users and especially to the physically challenged.

2. Proper attention should be given to the following design parameters:
 - (i) Design codes, aesthetics and anthropometrics, choice of materials and their fabrication, durability, weathering and maintenance. These parameters will contribute to the 'image value' of the tourist destination, hence the attention is necessary.
 - (ii) Signage: Adequacy and Placement. Signage plays a major role in way finding and accessibility. Hence design must be as per international norms and standards.
 - (iii) Litter/recycling bins. This also contributes to the 'image value' and therefore adequacy and placement of litter bins is a vital issue in the planning of a tourist destination or circuit.

- iv) Information and Tourist Facilitation/ Convenience centres are very crucial in planning large tourism sites. Well equipped with maps, tourist literature, utilities such as drinking water, washrooms, first aid, and a snack bar, the information centres would not only generate additional revenue but also enhance the 'image value' of the site.
 - v) Public toilets (supplemented with barrier free facilities) are a basic requirement today for any tourist site to sustain itself.
 - vi) Parking units, two-wheelers and four wheelers as well as parking facilities for the physically challenged must be made mandatory provisions.
3. States/Union Territory Administrations should encourage free and frequent distribution of tourism related literature, high quality tourist maps, guides, CDs, posters, tourism calendars, fold and take along maps. The tourism potential can also be enhanced through a very strong graphic display in order to promote India's vibrant and diverse culture.
 4. Detailed project reports must make clear that the land is available with

- the implementing agency. If work on a project sanctioned by the Ministry has failed to be initiated due to non-availability of land even after one year, the project will be rejected and the funds will be recovered.
5. Wayside amenities should be located at every 50 kms along the way leading to the tourist destinations/circuits.
6. Signages must conform to, as far as possible, international codes (For signages state parties should refer to the standards of the World Tourism Organisation).
7. States/UT Administrations should make efforts to upgrade and strengthen existing tourist facilities as a part of the tourism policy from their own resources simultaneously.
8. States should put in place, as far as possible, institutional mechanism for management through



Picture Courtesy: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

any appropriate agency for public conveniences, after following codal formalities.

b) BUILT HERITAGE & SIGNAGES

1. States/Union Territory Administrations should formulate, as far as possible, a Comprehensive Conservation Master Plan including research, documentation, value-significance, damage assessment, conservation, management, tourism infrastructure, risk assessment (carrying capacity), site interpretation, safety/ first aid and security, universal access, waste management, community consultations and engagement, implementation strategy, business plan etc.
2. States/Union Territory Administrations may follow international norms and guidelines/UNESCO Charters for World Heritage Sites in particular and for other heritage

sites/monuments in general (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>).

3. The conservation and tourism development plans of the States/ Union Territory Administrations should have sound financial and maintenance plans.
4. States/Union Territory Administrations should put in place appropriate institutional mechanisms for timely completion and post implementation maintenance of the tourist destination/ circuit.
5. For operation and maintenance, public private partnership (PPP) mode should be encouraged. It has been observed that initial investments into tourism destinations need to be followed with maintenance funds so that initial siphoned off funds are not lost due to lack of maintenance and refurbishment. Therefore at the inception, reser-

vation for maintenance must be included in the financial plans of a tourism project at least for a five year period.

c) CLIMATICALLY RESPONSIVE AND VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

1. Attempts should be made to design climatically responsive and location sensitive tourism architecture. It is recommended to involve technical experts to achieve the desired results in tourism plans.
2. Emphasis should be given to use of available local material and technology, and vernacular design principles.
3. Efforts should be made for capacity building of all tourism personnel regarding location, environment and contextual characteristics of tourist sites. Workshops including onsite best practices should be an important tool for capacity building and institutions capable of providing technical assistance /conducting the training/capacity building workshops should be identified and requested to organise the same.

d) URBAN LANDSCAPE

1. Local ambience should be reflected in the landscape through incorporation of local building and plant material. Minimal use of Hardscape materials is encouraged.
2. Use of Indigenous / Native species should be encouraged in plantation schemes.
3. Use of traditional methodology in construction techniques, if found appropriate, should be explored and encouraged.
4. States/Union Territories should try to ensure that
 - i) Bare minimum earthwork should be resorted to by retaining existing land profile as far as possible. This would aid in sustaining the existing water table, and soil stability.



Picture Courtesy: Ministry of Tourism, Government of India

Before and after (Qila Rai Pithora, Delhi). Tourism initiatives include conservation and consolidation of heritage areas which are repositories of history and ways of life. Left to their own fate, heritage sites would degenerate and vanish, but integrated into tourist circuits and sound infrastructure they can be brought into mainstream tourism itineraries.

- ii) Rainwater harvesting, ground water recharging and zero discharge should be adopted.
 - iii) Appropriate designs for the boundary work should be evolved keeping in view aesthetics, security and cost factor. The cost should not generally exceed 20% of allocated budget of a particular scheme.
 - iv) Solar lighting and use of renewable energy/ alternate energy sources are encouraged.
5. States/Union Territories should:
- i) Discourage fountains and such water-based elements in areas with water paucity.
 - ii) Ensure that water sources, required quantity of water and irrigation systems are available before commencing the project.
 - iii) Discourage large scale illumination in areas with electricity shortage without compromising security.
 - iv) Promote 'accessible' infrastructure.

- v) Prepare maintenance Plan and budget to be utilised for the following five years to ensure sustainability of projects. This should be funded through State Government /UT Administration or Public-Private Partnership.

The Way Forward: Tourism in India has come of age. There is a clear understanding that the diversity in tourism avenues and opportunities India offered to the tourist, makes it worthy of the 'Incredible India brand'. Yet, to live up to such a high ideal, we must match this diversity with an equally well backed infrastructure. For this alone, will be the propeller to the tourism growth in the country. Unless facilities, and comfort levels do not match to world standards the diversity in tourism will be left largely unexplored. An initiative in this regard has been taken by the Ministry of Tourism. As a post operative measure, and to reinforce its technical armature, the Ministry of Tourism has initiated the review

and monitoring of the projects, which it supports. The Ministry has in its maiden venture sought expertise of reputed Architectural Institutions and IITs to monitor and assist it in the various activities related to the creation of World Class Infrastructure. For the speedy implementation of these projects, it is recommended that the state level monitoring committee should not only regularly monitor but also send a quarterly report to the Ministry of Tourism with the objective to have a lucid assessment of the project.

The Ministry strongly agrees that there is a significant gap between the implementing agencies and the academia, whereby the repositories of intelligentsia and technical expertise remain untapped within the confines of academic institutions. To strengthen its technical mechanism, and to enhance a strategic partnership, the Ministry of Tourism, has solicited a close collaboration with reputed Schools of Architec-

ture and Engineering in the country to:

- a) Review the DPRs (detailed project reports) selectively for projects worth Rs.5-8 crores on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, which are received from State Governments and Union Territories, prior to acceptance of the DPR and grant of CFA (central financial assistance). The experts drawn from the architectural institutions would also assist the Ministry to advise it on its ITDC and HUDCO developed projects for interior design /etc. Another area in which the architectural experts would assist the Ministry of Tourism is towards onsite inspections of ongoing tourism projects funded by the Ministry of Tourism. Thirdly, resource persons from the reputed architectural institutions, on behalf of the Ministry of Tourism, would conduct periodic workshops for capacity building within State Governments and UTs for preparation of DPRs under special themes.
- b) For the development of the mega projects (project cost upto and above Rs. 25 crore) the Ministry of Tourism is keen to get the DPRs prepared from the architectural institutions and from institutions of excellence. These institutions would receive the project on nomination basis directly from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. The proposal prepared would be presented before a review committee comprising experts from various architectural institutions across the country. Recommendations made by the expert committee would be suitably incorporated and a final DPR would be prepared for the mega project and then approved by the competent authority. These initiatives are first steps towards building an attitude for working on

a national platform for the development of high quality—world class infrastructure. Collaboration with academic institutions of excellence and implementing agencies with a hope to sustain and improve the Tourism Sector in the country is the driving force behind this goal. It is the endeavor of the ministry to develop large scale infrastructure conforming to international standards as it feels strongly that; tourist flow shall achieve a quantum leap if the assets created are properly maintained in the optimum conditions ensuring the comfort and safety of the tourists and citizens alike and making the campaign 'Incredible India' a reality.

STATISTICS

1. To quote the figures from the Ministry of Tourism, the number of manpower employed by the tourism sector itself has increased from 44.7 million to 51.1 million during period 2004-05 to 2006-07.
2. For example, the number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) has increased by 5.6% in 2008 over 2000. Similarly, Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE) have increased to \$11,747 million in 2008 from \$ 3,103 million in 2002.
3. More than fifty per cent of the Ministry's expenditure on Plan schemes is incurred for development of quality tourism infrastructure at various tourist destinations and circuits spread throughout the country.
4. For example the degree of comfort or safety in a hotel room or the anthropometrics and space standards, materials and finishing qualities of its toilet would determine the class of infrastructure being provided.
5. The Ministry of Tourism is also working with other Central Government Ministries and concerned State

Governments to achieve convergence and synergy on various government programmes so that the impact of investment on these destinations is maximized. For identified destinations/circuits covered by the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), convergence of resources is being ensured so that the tourism related infrastructure and urban civic infrastructure complement each other. The Ministry is also taking up the issue of rail, road and air connectivity with the concerned ministries for these projects.

6. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Product/Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits, the Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for tourism projects identified in consultation with them for the improvement of existing tourism products and also for developing new ones. 100% Central Assistance is given under the scheme for development of destinations/circuits including mega projects to world standard and also for rural tourism infrastructure development. The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance up to Rs. 5 crore for the development of Destinations and Rs. 8 crore for Circuits. The upper limit of financial assistance has been increased to Rs. 25 crore and Rs. 50 crore for development of identified mega destinations and circuits respectively. ■

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