A Study to Measure the Socio Economic Impact of Effective Tourism Planning: A Study of Gujarat Government Tourism Planning for Kutch-Bhuj

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Abstract: The current study aims to study the effect of earthquake of 2001 on tourism sector of Kutch-Bhuj region. Researcher has also studied the tourism policy of Gujrat government for tourism development in Kutch-Bhuj region and the socio-economic impact of tourism policy of Gujrat government for Kutch-Bhuj region. The study is purely based on the secondary data. Tourism policy of Gujarat government has included various factors to be focused to promote the tourism growth in the region such as; attracting private investment in the tourism sector, improving the skills of manpower in this sector, rail, road and air connectivity of the tourists’ places and the new concepts in the tourism industry such as; green tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, etc. There is a huge impact of tourism planning and policy of Gujrat government after earthquake of 2001, on the social and economic life of the people living in Kutch-Bhuj region. All the activities of government have resulted into growth of socio and economic condition of the people of Kutch-Bhuj. Tourism development of Kutch-Bhuj region resulted into job creations, infrastructure development, and increase in the standard of living increase in resources, increase in income of local people, and increase in environmental development of among people.

Keywords: Tourism policy, Tourism planning, Kutch-Bhuj, Gujrat, Socio economic, India, Tourism product and Tourism infrastructure.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism planning has been defined as a process of planning about the development of tourism activities in a particular region, or to plan about promoting a place as tourist destination. The planning process involves the setting up of objectives in line with the limitations or constraints, estimating budgetary constraints, measuring the future impact of tourism development on the socio-cultural environment and at last to decide about the implementation plan for the same (Andriotis, 2001). Tourism planning is a step by step process. The objectives of the tourism planning can be attracting the tourists, to increase the tourists traffic and income from tourism sector, to develop an area as tourists’ destination, to develop a particular type of tourism such as; educational tourism, religious tourism or eco-tourism (Brohman, 1996 and Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003). The objective of tourism planning can be political in nature such as; making a tourist place famous or for increasing the reputation of a tourist destination at international platform, or for rehabilitation of the old or heritage assets of the nation such as; forts, monuments, or other heritage buildings (Hall, 2000). Once the objectives of the tourism planning get defined, there is a need to consider the resources also. Types of resources and the extent of resources required to execute the tourism plan (Andriotis, 2004). It is important to consider the impact of the tourism plans on the natural environment, and the socio-cultural environment of the local community. There is always a limitation of each and every destination to absorb the tourism development, up to that limit no more development can be absorbed and if it is extended beyond that limit then it starts affecting the natural resources of that destination in negative way. Tourism development can have both the negative and the positive impacts on the destination (Getz, 1987). Positive impacts can be in terms of economic development of the destination, rise in standard of living of local community, increase in tourist income, increase in foreign exchange reserves, and infrastructural development of the local community (Edgell, 1990). But, sometimes tourism development may have negative impact on the local community, unplanned or unwanted development may have negative impact on the sentiments of the local community (Gunn, 1994). Unplanned expansion of destination may create the problems in day to day life of the local community members (Mill and Morrison, 1985). Thus, it is required to frame a comprehensive plan for tourism development which can cover all the aspects related to the resources availability, prevailing socio-cultural environment of local community, attitude of the local community towards
the tourism development, factors related to natural environment, and the potential of a tourist place for further development of tourism in that particular place (Bramwell and Sharman, 1999).

Tourism industry in India has huge potential for growth and can contribute significantly to the earnings to the country. Understanding the tourism’s importance, Gujarat Government’s ministry of industries has rolled out a robust and concrete Tourism policy in 2015. The policy is valid till 2020 and is aimed at promoting the tourism industry in Gujarat. According to the tourism industry report, total foreign exchange earnings for India contributed by tourism sector were around $20 billion by the year 2014, which is expected to be increase further at the rate of 5 percent in upcoming years. Gujarat, the land of Mahatma Gandhiji and Sardar Patel, is gifted with a number of tourist attractions and the tourism industry is expected to grow to 5% of state GDP. It is also estimated to create 3 million jobs by 2020.

Gujarat Government, under its main programme “Gatisheel Gujarat”, is looking for overall development of the state and tourism industry is one of its main focus points to generate high growth. According to the “Tourism policy 2015-2020” Gujarat government and its tourism department has taken policy initiatives to encourage tourist visit, improve tourist experience, increase investment in tourism sector and develop sustainable tourism in Gujarat. In order to have a successful implementation of the tourism policy, Gujarat government has formed and regulated a high level empowered committee and implementation committee.

The government is planning for an increase in infrastructure spending to build new roads, provide better sanitation and civic amenities to the visitors. Financial subsidies upto 50 lakhs is given for investments in various segments of tourism to encourage private investments in the state. This will make the PPP model in tourism investments viable and successful. Government is also giving various exemptions from tax on registration; tax on electricity and entertainment tax, in order to boost the growth of this sector. Special consideration is given for investments in high potential areas and urban areas. New investments projects like cruise ships in coastline and theme parks have been planned in the near future. The government has also done a detail segregation of different tourism opportunities like ecotourism, spiritual tourism, education tourism etc. to target various interested groups. Another focus is to improve the connectivity of the tourist areas through air, rail and road transport. In addition to this, government plan for developing Tier 2 cities and their connectivity to major cities will help in tourist mobilization.

The government also wants to improve the experience of the tourist by ensuring safety, providing the tourists with helplines numbers and grievance redressal mechanism. Development of human capital is also important for the tourism and hospitality sector. Well qualified and skilled hospitality employees can make a difference to the overall experience and can excite the tourists. The government is providing subsidies for students studying hospitality and tourism management. It has a twin benefit – one it results in the growth of the industry and second, it increases the employability of the youth. The government has also considered developing the livelihood of artisans and handicrafts makers under recent tourism policy.

Successful implementation of the tourism policy also requires promotion, marketing and advertising. Gujarat is a tourist friendly destination which can offer exciting experiences. Regular publicity campaigns and fairs are held nationally and globally to attract tourists. The “vibrant Gujarat summit” is used as a platform for investors to explore the opportunities in Gujarat in all industries including the tourism and hospitality industry.

Gujarat government is also focusing on the tourist destinations with huge potential for growth. One among them is Rann of Kutch for which Gujarat government is making efforts to bring it as a tourist destination on world map. One of the main attractions is the “Rann Utsav”, which gives an opportunity for the tourists to appreciate the salt desert and the regions culture and cuisine. Shipping sector of Gujarat is in the process of developing new ports in this region for tourism promotion and the other existing non major ports which were not in operations have been utilized by the tourism department for attracting tourist. Thus, overall it can be said that tourism policy of Gujarat government has included various factors to be focused to promote the tourism growth in the region such as; attracting private investment in the tourism sector, improving the skills of manpower in this sector, rail, road and air connectivity of the tourists’ places and the new concepts in the tourism industry such as; green tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, etc. Thus, it can be said that for the tourism development of any region, a well-planned tourism policy with strict implementation process and the provisions for regular evaluation of its impact on natural environment are essential components.

Objectives

The study is to achieve the following objectives:
1. To study the effect of earthquake of 2001 on tourism sector of Kutch-Bhuj region.
2. To study the tourism policy of Gujarat government for tourism development in Kutch-Bhuj region.
3. To study the socio economic impact of tourism policy of Gujarat government for Kutch-Bhuj region.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is conceptual in nature, where researchers has made an in depth review of Gujarat government policy for tourism development in the region of Kutch-Bhuj. The study is purely based on the secondary data
III. TOURISM POLICY OF INDIA AND GUJRAT GOVERNMENT TO KUTCH-BHUJ REGION

Tourism industry of India has emerged as one of the important growth driver of Indian economy. It is contributing significantly to the GDP of the country. Tourism and hospitality industry are a vital part of the service sector. As per the tourism policy of India 2017, the total contribution of Indian tourism and hospitality sector in its GDP was USD 18 billion in 2006, it increased up to USD 31 billion by 2010. At present Indian tourism and hospitality sector is contributing to India’s GDP by 47 USD billion, which is estimated to be USD 160 billion by the year, 2026. The compounded annual growth rate of contribution in GDP by Indian tourism and hospitality sector was recorded 11 percent during last ten years from 2006 to 2017.

The contribution of Indian travel and tourism sector in its GDP was USD 88 billion in 2006, it increased up to 116 USD billion by 2012. At present the total contribution of Indian travel and tourism sector in its GDP is USD 36.2 billion, which is estimated to be USD 280.5 billion by the year 2026. The compounded annual growth rate of Indian travel and tourism was found to be 5 percent during last ten years from 2006 to 2017.

Total number of foreign tourist arrived in India was 4 billion in 2006, it increased up to 6.3 billion by 2011. At present total foreign tourist arrival in India is 3.1 billion by the year 2017 which is estimated to be 15.13 billion by the year 2025. The total annual growth rate in foreign tourist arrival in India was 7.1 percent during last ten years from 2005 to 2017. Total foreign exchange income from tourism sector was USD 8 billion in the year 2006, which increased up to USD 21.1 billion in the year 2017.

In India, tourism companies can be divided into four segments namely; online booking companies, hotels, airlines and the tour operators. Some of the major online booking companies of India are makemytrip.com, yatra.com, cleartrip.com etc., major companies working as tour operators in India are mainly; Raj travels and SOTC, major airlines which promotes tourism in India are; spice jet, Indian airways, indigo flight etc., and the major hotels in India are Taj hotels, Oberoi and ITC hotels.

Total number of domestic tourists in India was recorded 9 billion by the year 2016, which is estimated to be 203.3 billion by the year 2026. In tourism sector, majority of the share in expenditures is of domestic tourist and foreign tourists only contribute 17.3 percent of the total expenditures. Majority of the revenue in Indian tourism sector is generated through leisure activities only.

Majority of the tourists travel by air and book their tickets online as, travel operators provide better price and cheapest price for online booking. They also provide various modes for payment while making online booking. Indian tourism industry is promoting India as a religious place through spiritual tourism or pilgrimage tourism. Various places of India are famous for religious activities and tourism department is working to promote these places. Some of the well-known religious places of India are Char Dham Yatra, Jyotirling, Mathura, Amar Nath yatra, Bodh Gaya, and Kashi Vishwanath Temple.

Indian tourism industry has huge potential to emerge as adventure tourism. There are various hill stations, where tourists come for adventure, Deserts areas, mountains, and the green fields of India are best attractions for tourists for adventure activities.

Indian tourism policy highlights the various strategies adopted by the tourism department for the tourism promotion and development. These strategies are mainly related to market expansion, facility oriented, ease of documentation for tourists etc. Government is working in the direction of promoting tourism industry at international level through various types of marketing activities, through promotion of local cultures, traditions, and also supporting the artisans for promotion of handicrafts industry. Government has made various changes in the documentation process of visa for tourists arriving in India, it has started tourists welcome center at crowded airports such as; Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Bengaluru. Government is providing various subsidies to the private investors to attract private investment in the Indian tourism sector for the purpose of development of infrastructure facilities, preservation of heritage buildings and for providing the basic facilities in the tourism sector. Medical tourism is another important strategy which Indian government has adopted for promoting India as a medical hub. Indian government is promoting the Ayurveda medical treatment, herbal treatment, and


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various alternative herbs which can replace English medicines. Other than this, the medical cost in India is cheaper than other countries which are attracting foreign patients to come to India for medical treatment.

During the period of 2010 to 2016, the total amount of investment made in the tourism sector through foreign direct investment was USD 9.23 billion. In 12th five-year plan, government has allocated USD 1.3 billion for the development of culture and USD 2.8 billion for the promotion of tourism infrastructure in the country. Ministry of tourism has set a separate board that will look after all the projects related to tourists’ accommodation and development of human resources in the tourism sector. Government has also appointed special tourist police at famous tourists’ places, for the safety of tourists. Government has allocated USD 319.19 billion for the tourism development in North-east India. Government has also started the initiative to provide 100 percent tax exemption on capital expenditures made for the construction of two stars or above hotels at tourist places in India. Indian government has also started e-tourists visa to attract foreign tourists in the country. Major tourism projects undertaken by Indian government for tourism promotion are mainly; Swadesh Darshan, Project Mausam, and Sagarmala Project etc.

Gujarat earthquake was a devastating disaster in the past decade in India which caused considerable economic, social and human lives losses. On January 26th 2001, an earthquake of magnitude 6.9 on Richter scale struck Gujarat. It was considered to be the most devastating earthquake in Gujarat since 150 years. Nearly 7633 villages were affected by the severe earthquake and among them 450 villages were completely flattened. The disaster has affected more than 10 million people in the Kutch-Bhuj region and other parts of Gujarat. The disaster resulted in direct loss of human lives and livestock, destruction of private property, municipal infrastructure, electricity and telecommunication infrastructure, schools and hospitals. The estimated cost due to the direct loss was nearly US $2097 million. Apart from the direct losses, many indirect losses too had cost the states its economic and social activity. Losses of business infrastructure, trade, exports/imports, and agricultural output, unemployment due to disability caused by the disaster and other health hazard were the indirect losses. These indirect losses had been estimated at around another US $600 million. In addition to the direct and indirect losses which are of short and medium term in nature, there were long term impacts on overall development of the region, investment climate on the region and community development/migration. These long term repercussions were estimated to cost an additional loss of approximately US $ 3000 million. The prompt and necessary action by the state and central government and various world organizations like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, other partner countries helped in reconstruction and rehabilitation of the affected areas. Nearly 16 different sectors of infrastructure, economic activity and social/community activity was reconstructed in the medium term. The multifaceted approach by the governing organization made sure the restoration of physical infrastructure like road, water lines, electricity; housing, urban infrastructure and capacity building. Equal attention was required for social economic rehabilitation as the people in the region lost employment and livelihood. Apart from this, necessities like education and health infrastructure which was completely destroyed needed to be replaced and reconstructed. Agricultural irrigation systems and rural cottage industrial infrastructure which remained as a back bone for the rural livelihood was left severely damaged. So it was the need of the hour to build these to bring back life to the rural and semi-urban areas.

The Gujarat earthquake had caused not only damage to the lives of the people but also to the economic activity, Thiruppugazh (2012). One of the many economic activities that got severely affected was the Tourism activity. Bhuj is a place full of life and it is considered an introduction to Kutch. The Bhuj-Kutch region offers many different experiences to tourists with its historical monuments, museums, markets, craft works, natural sceneries and landscape. The rehabilitation and reconstruction program immediately after the earthquake to build basic and necessity infrastructure was a starting point for reviving the tourism sector of the region. After successful reconstruction, the Gujarat Government came up with a Tourism Policy in 2003 to rejuvenate and grow the sector, Thiruppugazh (2012). The Tourism Policy 2003-2010 of the Gujarat government served as a pinnacle for development of the Tourism industry, along with the general capacity building and infrastructure development policies. The Policy’s vision was to develop tourism as an economic growth engine which will bring in employment and prosperity of the region. The Policy was aimed not only in economic growth but also on preservation, conservation and promotion of rich heritage of the state.

Gujarat as a state attracts nearly a crore of tourists (both domestic as well as international) per year. The state also has around 10 million Non-resident Indians, who are willing to visit the state for various reasons, Thiruppugazh (2012). This provides an immense opportunity to the policy makers to attract the diaspora. The Policy aims to provide world class facilities and services to the visiting tourists. It focuses broadly on development of infrastructure, improving connectivity, and providing basic facilities in all the major tourist attractions. The policy wants to promote event (festival) based tourism in addition to building the Brand Gujarat in other countries. Gujarat has many festivals to its credit - Navratri, Somnath festival, Dwarka festival, Tarnader fare, Kutch festival, Kite festival to name a few. Organizing these festivals seamlessly and promoting them to attract tourists was the government’s priority. The policy saw this as an opportunity to attract tourists and present them with the rich culture of Gujarat, Thiruppugazh (2012). This in turn will result in tourists to explore other destinations and give them a memorable experience. The Government of Gujarat developed regions of
tourist attraction named as “Circuits”. One among them is the Kutch circuit which offers Kutch circuit (Little Rann Sanctuary, Narayan Sarovar, Koteshwar, Mata-no Madh, Bhadrasaww, Dholavira, Bhuj, Mandvi).

IV. SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT TOURISM POLICY ON KUTCH- BHUJ

This section discusses the major impact of tourism policy of Gujrat government on the social and economic status of the various stakeholders who are associated to the Kutch-Bhuj region either directly or indirectly. The stakeholders include tourist visiting these regions, people living in these areas, town operators, tourist guides, travel agents, local shopkeepers, government agencies involved in tourism area and the various organisations providing various services such as; Accommodation, water, transportation, food, entertainment etc.

1. Increase in job opportunities: Tourism planning and policy of Gujrat government after earthquake of 2001, resulted in job creation in the region of Kutch-Bhuj. Government has put efforts for the development of tourism in the region through various new projects which has created jobs for local people in various area such as tourist guides, travel agents, tour operators and various other jobs in hotel industry and transportation industry. Due to the tourism development in the region of Kutch-Bhuj, local people have started their shops to fulfil the increased demand of tourists visiting these places. It has created jobs for local people other than the owner of these shops.

2. Preservation and maintenance of Heritage buildings: Due to earthquake of 2001 in Gujrat there was a huge disaster in the region of Kutch-Bhuj, as Bhuj was the centre point of earthquake. Government of Gujrat has given special emphasis to preservation and maintenance of heritage buildings and monuments as it got destroyed during earthquake of 2001. The tourism policy of Gujrat government has allocated huge funds especially for this purpose. Gujrat Government has also invited private investors for the reconstruction and repair of heritage buildings of Kutch-Bhuj region.

3. Promotion of local traditions, culture and values: The tourism policy of Gujrat Government has focused on attracting tourists from various parts of the country as well as from the various parts of the world through promotion of local traditions, culture and values of the Kutch-Bhuj Region. Government has allocated funds for the marketing of various fairs and festivals which are being conducted by the tourism department of Kutch-Bhuj region. Government has made use of social media, websites of tourism department and the tourism information centre for the purpose of marketing of tourism products of this region.

4. Infrastructure development: Due to earthquake of 2001, there was the huge damage to the infrastructure of Kutch-Bhuj region. There was huge damage to the road network buildings, hospitals, schools and hotel and restaurants of this region. Government has made efforts for the development of infrastructure in these regions to promote the tourism industry of Kutch-Bhuj. Under tourism policy of Gujrat government has allocated funds for the infrastructure of Kutch-Bhuj. The major activities done by state government for infrastructure development of Kutch-Bhuj region mainly includes; construction of new roads in the region, construction of hotels, guest houses and establishing tourist information centre in the region. Government has also provided financial assistance to local shopkeepers for setting up of their shops, financial assistance to tour operators and tour agents to setup tour and travel agencies in this region which can promote the growth of tourism in Kutch-Bhuj region.

5 Improvement in basic facilities: Government has made proper provisions for improving the basic facilities in Kutch-Bhuj to promote the growth of tourism industry. The major activates done by government in this area include mainly; providing electricity, drinking water, improving the quality of food and safety and security provisions for tourist and the local people. Government has also put efforts for establishing ATMs, Banks and centres for exchange foreign currency etc., to improve the basic facilities required for the tourism development of Kutch-Bhuj region.

6. Increase in standard of living: Tourism policy of Gujrat Government aims to improve the living standard of people living in Kutch-Bhuj region by creating various job opportunities in tourism sector. Government has improved the infrastructure of these regions which has made the life of the local people easy and created opportunities for the local people to get connected with the other parts of the country. Government improved the basic facilities of the region which has helped in improving the medical health conditions, education level and also provided an opportunity to promote their culture at international platform.

7. Increase the income of local people: Government has created jobs in the tourism area which has help the local people in earning income. Government has also provided financial assistance to local shopkeepers in setting our shops for selling various handicrafts items which has help the local shopkeeper in earn income. The improved infrastructure enabled the local people to move out of the region for doing jobs which has created opportunities for earning income.

8. Environmental awareness: Tourism policy of Gujrat government has focused on promoting eco-tourism in the region which has helped in conservation of natural resources of these regions. Under tourism policy
government development policy government has also taken initiatives to make people aware about the environment protection, provisions for hygiene and sanitation in the region and protection of wild life animals which will also help in increasing the variety of tourism products available in the region such as wild life park, bird’s sanctuary, parks etc.

9. Increase the resources: The major impact of tourism development policy in Kutch-Bhuj region was on the resources of these regions areas. The job resources have increased, the increase rate of tourist inflow led to increase in the income of local shop keepers, tourist and travel agencies, increase in the transportation facilities and development of information technology in the region.

10. Improvements in skills and quality of human resource: Government has made to improve the quality of human resources in the area of tourism by establishing various training centres for tourist guides. Government has also established various educational institutes which provide higher education, diploma and degree certificates especially in the tourism and hospitality management. These institutes will help in improving the quality of human resources in the tourism sector and will generate the experts in the tourism management area. Over all, it can be said that there is a huge impact of tourism planning and policy of Gujarat government after earth quake of 2001, on the social and economic life of the people living in Kutch-Bhuj region. All the activities of government have resulted into growth of socio and economic condition of the people of Kutch-Bhuj. Tourism development of Kutch-Bhuj region resulted into job creations, infrastructure development, and increase in the standard of living in resources, increase in income of local people, and increase in environmental development of among people.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN FOR THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN KUTCH-BHUJ

Following are the recommendations given by the researcher for the tourism development of Kutch-Bhuj region:

1. Experts in the fields of hotel management and tourism must be associated with all the decision-making bodies of the structure.

2. The Gujarat Tourism Department must have an independent research, development and analysis wing to research tourist demand and tourism structure in Gujarat so as to develop the prospects of tourism in the state.

3. The Government of Gujarat must also develop an institute of hotel management and tourism guidance in the state to have better trained and equipped units like Tourist bungalows, hotels, midways night resorts etc.

4. All the tourist information bureaus must be adequately staffed and equipped to satisfactorily perform their functions.

5. Kutch must be declared an international airport with international tourist facilities so that more and more foreign tourists may be attracted to visit this state.

6. To attract national and international tourists, government must propose long term planning strategies, rather emphasizing on only short term event base planning. Development of research wings in particular with respects of tourism, would enhance the potentiality of the region. Organization of State or national level seminars, conferences & workshops would encourage the research and planning for sustainable tourism development.

7. Specialized professionals from hotel management, tourism managements shall be appointed at tourist centres. Institutional development must be encouraging to produce quality of human resources, which would be more beneficial for tourism growth in the state.

8. Direct and secure employment opportunities needs to be created in for better service in tourism fields. The state government must encourage its employees to undertake journey to Gujarat tourist places by providing concessions as per government norms.

9. Now days the Kutch is becoming a favourable tourist location so special care must be given to infrastructure development in terms of improving road connectivity, easy and efficient transport mechanisms. Rope way or cable care can minimize the rush and destruction of natural beauty at Kala Dungar (Black Mountain).

10. Safety and security of life and property of the tourists must be taken care at least at the coastal sites. Increasing number of sinking accidents draw strong attentions towards allocation of lifeguards. Protection barricade should be erected at coasts for the protection of tourist who liked to enjoy bathing. Beaches must be cleaned at every morning during season and off season both. State Government should rethink about level of liberalizing liquor prohibition act in Gujarat. There is a need of concern about requirements of basic amenities at most of the destinations, such as toilet, bathrooms, changing rooms, rest rooms, drinking water facilities etc.

11. The tourist destinations and its peripheral areas should be clean & green. New environment friendly plantations must be done. All along the roads the green plantations are required especially between Bhuj to Narayan Sarovar Lake.
VI. CONCLUSION
Tourism policy of Gujarat government has included various factors to be focused to promote the tourism growth in the region such as; attracting private investment in the tourism sector, improving the skills of manpower in this sector, rail, road and air connectivity of the tourists’ places and the new concepts in the tourism industry such as; green tourism, cultural tourism, religious tourism, etc. There is a huge impact of tourism planning and policy of Gujarat government after earth quake of 2001, on the social and economic life of the people living in Kutch-Bhuj region. All the activities of government have resulted into growth of socio and economic condition of the people of Kutch-Bhuj. Tourism development of Kutch-Bhuj region resulted into job creations, infrastructure development, and increase in the standard of living increase in resources, increase in income of local people, and increase in environmental development of among people.

VII. REFERENCES