

PERSPECTIVES OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT AND ITS IMPACT ON HOST COMMUNITIES IN BHARATPUR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KEOLADEO NATIONAL PARK

TRIPTA JHA *

ABSTRACT

Bharatpur city "The Gateway of eastern Rajasthan" is situated in the green belt of alluvial tract of river Yamuna and its tributaries. The city has grown up as a land of tourist paradise on the world map. Thousands of tourists comes to this fascinating national park in search of solace, peace, knowledge and to experience the ecology of birds and the phenomena associated with scenic beauty of the park.

Human traits endowed with the rich natural resources, have altered the earth surface by developing the unique landscapes as the centers of tourist pilgrimage. Bharatpur and keolodeo national park is one of such centers that have been the focal point of international tourist attraction.

An effort, to visualize the environmental, socio-cultural and economic impacts on the various communities has been made in this paper.

PERSPECTIVE OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT IN BHARATPUR

For tourism to develop, various components are to be exploited. A wide range of development agents exists. The development of tourisms in Bharatpur cannot be properly understood and explained without making a reference to the following -

1. Historical Background of:-
 - Bharatpur city
 - Keoladeo National Park
2. Tourist Resources

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: EVOLUTION OF THE CITY

There is an intimate relationship between the

evolution of townscape and the geographical factors responsible for the origin and growth of a city. The city and a fort are said to have been founded about 253 years ago by Rustam, a Jat from sogaria clan in 1733; Maharaja surajmal took it from khemkaran, the son of Rustam and improved it by constructing a big fort and the earthen wall around the city. The city is surrounded by a masonry wall on all sides and can be approached through 10 gates. They are the Mathura gate, the Benarayan gate, the Atalbanth gate, the Neemda gate, the Anah gate, the Kumher gate, the Chandpole gate, the Goverdhan gate, the Jaghina gate and the Surajpole gate

* Assistant Professor, Geography, Govt. P.G. College, Sehore, M.P.
Correspondence E-mail Id: editor@eurekajournals.com

In the north west of the city stands the historical Masonry stone fort of a square dimension with high walls surrounded by a moat about 61 meters wide and very deep. Roads leading to the fort through its two gates cross the moat by two masonry bridges. The doors of the gate towards Gopalgarh are made of 'Ashta Dhatu' an alloy of eight metals. There are old Palaces inside the fort, clock tower and jawahar burj erected in the year 1765 in the honor of Maharaja Jawahar Singh's victory over the Imperial city of Delhi.

A few centuries ago the area presently occupied by Bharatpur city was a dense forest. Pre-independence period of the evolution of the township of Bharatpur is marked by the development of residential areas within the walled town. Only some official groups and few wealthy people mostly connected with rulers moved beyond the walls towards the east along Agra road. The townscape was then characterized by three distinct types of settlement, the cantonment, the civil lines and the city proper.

THE MORPHOLOGY OF THE CITY

Bharatpur city, after independence, is marked by an accelerated rate of growth. Establishment of large scale industries, which exerted labour pull from the surrounding countryside, resulted in the expansion of the boundaries. After the formation of urban improvement trust on 2nd Oct., 1959, the growth of the took place rapidly. An industrial area, north of the Railway station has been established with medium and light industrial units.

In spite of all the above efforts, civic provisions and improvements, the city proper still breaths in deep rooted congestion of all types. The morphology of the city is the result of its unplanned growth, with narrow lanes; old medieval age patterned clustered house and crowded shops. During the post-independence

period not only the vacant patches of space lying within the walled town have been filled in, but along with it the city is manifesting signs of expansion on its periphery.

KEOLADEO NATIONAL PARK

Keoladeo National Park, popularly known as 'Ghana Bird's Sanctuary' or ' Bharatpur Bird's Sanctuary' is situated at a distance of about 2 kms south-east of Bharatpur city.

The park consists of a flat level land with a gentle slope toward its centre, where ultimately it forms a depression extending about 8.5 km² in area. A masonry boundary wall made of stone encircles the park. All around the park about 14 small and big villages are located along with their agricultural economy and rural society. The natural environment inside the park is unique in its beauty and presents a lovely panoramic view.

The National park acquires its name 'KEOLADEO' because of the existence of an ancient hindu temple, dedicated to Lord shiva, in the heart of the park. 'GHANA' being a vernacular synonym for dense forest.

This National park is not only reputed as a winter resort of the wild fowl but has been a unique duck shooting preserve, where 354 different species of birds out of a total of 2000 species (found in the whole Indian territory) are seen together twittering, dancing and swimming So many species accumulating within a small area of 29 kms² is indeed a heritage as compared to mere 600 species of birds which inhabit the whole of Europe.

The real charm of keoladeo National park lies in the opportunity of looking at this variety at a single spot. Since these birds regularly visit this park from July to November for breeding purposes. Serves as a pilgrimage for the Bird-watchers and treasure for the naturalists.

The extensive lakes of shallow water with rich biotic vegetation provide congenial nesting and breeding conditions during monsoon season. Therefore, this place is a great attraction to the tourists (domestic and foreign) and a very important centre for scientific investigations on the biology and ecology of water-birds.

During monsoon, rain water and water channelized from Ajan Dam on the west inundates nearly 11.59 kms² This vast shallow (max. depth 1.7 meters) swampy area with abundant insects etc. and plenty of Babul, Kadam, Ber, Ficus and other trees provide an ideal habitat for nesting of water-birds and for winter shelter by migratory birds. In fact keoladeo National park is a paradise for ornithologists and photo-naturalists. Presence of over 360 species of birds in this small area makes it the richest habitat in the world.

This place is easily accessible by road and rail being 180 kms from Delhi and only 48 kms from Agra. As the sanctuary is situated on the outskirts of Bharatpur city. Visitors and tourists can stay at Bharatpur also. so many great scholars have been doing research on the ecology and population of creatures and birds found in the park. Boating in the shallow lake and film shooting in the dense forest are also important features of this park.

OTHER PLACES OF TOURIST INTEREST

From architectural point of view there are some other important buildings of tourist interest in the city. These are the Ganga Mandir, Lakshman Mandir (old & New), Motimahal and Jama Masjid.

TOURIST RESOURCES

Tourism, like other economic and social activities, does not occur evenly or randomly in space. Certain sites, locations or regions are more favorable for tourist development than others. There are various location factors which

influence tourist development. These individual factors can be grouped into eight broad Categories.

CLIMATE

Climatic data of Bharatpur city suggest its suitability for developing tourism.

ATTRACTION

The favorable weather of Bharatpur is the major attraction for both the migratory birds and the tourists. The weather marked by warm temperatures and high sunshine hours

SEASONALITY

Longer winter season gives a better utilization of plants in the form of shelter, insects and fish as the principal diet, and shallow water lake for swimming to the birds. From November to March the season at Bharatpur becomes attractive to the foreign tourists especially from occidental countries. There is no religious attraction at Bharatpur that may develop religious tourism to the city except during the month of October every year, when Jaswant Exhibition is held. Winter passes with meager rainfall, so it does not detract the foreign tourists. On an average 100000 tourists visit keoladeo National Park during winter season.

CONSTRUCTION

Development costs do not raise in Bharatpur as the construction period is not limited by seasonal climatic constraints such as rainy season or harsh winters.

OPERATIONS

Comfort and weather for landscape touring are the eminent factors which influence the recreational activity of tourists. Climatically keoladeo National Park is an ideal and most suitable spot for promoting tourism since the

average monthly maximum and minimum temperatures are 34.69 Celsius in June and 13.20 Celsius in February respectively.

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Physical conditions, other than climatic once, are important in several aspects of tourist development, particularly at the Keoladeo National Park. These important physical aspects are as follows

BUILDING SITE

There is a sufficiently large site to locate the required accommodation, supporting facilities and necessary infrastructure. Soils, geology, topography and slope stability are among the many physical site attributes to the development of the keoladeo National park as a tourist centre.

ACCESS

Being situated in a leveled plain area, the material required for construction is easily accessible as and when needed for building purposes and no additional costs are involved for the physical sites.

RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

The backland of the National park is enriched by shade, trees, hospitable environment and natural peace. Since it is located at a distance of 2 kms from the main city, therefore, neither the tourists nor the birds feel the hustle and bustle of the city.

Morning and evening hours are a rare sight to look at the flying, swimming and chirping scenic beauty of the birds.

ATTRACTIONS

1. Tourists supply markets
 - Foreign
 - Domestic

2. Tourists interests

FOREIGN TOURIST SUPPLY MARKET

Although there is no rule as to from where visitors come to visit Bharatpur, foreign tourists come from those countries where persons have both time and money at their disposal.

European continent is the largest foreign tourist's supplier to Bharatpur. Besides time and money factors the land horizons of U.K. are not vast enough to attract the local persons for its natural sights. India being the land of rich cultural and natural diversities provides them ample opportunities to see the places of tourists "interests and preferences."

North American countries such as U.S.A. and Canada are also very regular and rich suppliers of tourists to Bharatpur.

DOMESTIC TOURIST SUPPLY MARKET

As there is no rule as to wherefrom tourists come, this also applies to the domestic tourists also. Bharatpur is certainly in an advantageous position of being situated very near from the national and provincial capitals. It, therefore, attracts tourists almost from all its neighboring states. Enveloped the whole of India except,

Delhi, being a national capital and a cosmopolitan city, has certain advantages as compared to other states in refining the cultural attitudes of its inhabitants. Their daily life routine is a mechanized one, hence they aspire to go out for pleasure trips just to become free from their mechanized and cumbersome life. Therefore, Delhi is the most important tourist market of Bharatpur contributing some 50% domestic tourist supply to Bharatpur.

Jaipur is the second important tourist supply centre sharing 73.2% of the tourist traffic from Rajasthan to Bharatpur, but the tourists from

Jaipur do not come with a single purpose of sight-seeing. Most of them are government officers and they manage to come on official visits and man oeuvre their official status to bring their families also at the Govt. Costs to see keoladeo National park of Bharatpur especially during winter season, while tourists from Bombay and Calcutta come to Delhi with business motives and in addition to their business also take the opportunity of visiting Bharatpur National park.

It is very much astonishing that persons from Agra and Mathura, although very near to bharatpur, do not show any interest in visiting keoladeo National park. Because the former is a historical tourist centre and later is a religious centre, and moreover they (the inhabitants of these towns) lack the sense of natural sight-seeing.

Bharatpur city is situated on the main route between Delhi and Bombay of western Railway and is a junction of broad-gauge and metre-gauge. It is well connected by rail and road with Jaipur in the west and Agra in the east.

CARRYING CAPACITY

Recently the number of visiting persons to this National park has increased tremendously. During 1961 only about 250 persons visited this sanctuary, and now it exceeds to more than 100000. None of them experienced the difficulty of seeing it. This reflects that the carrying capacity of the park is not saturated, because of the lengthy tourism-activity span. Accommodation capacity has also increased, both at the public and private levels.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In addition to transport and services, infrastructural facilities in the form of health, security services, sewerage, power and water supply, labour supply, the attitudes of local residents to tourists and political stability in the

nation are other advantageous considerations. Foreign exchange conversion facilities are also available in the state bank of Bikaner and jaipur, Forest Lodge and Saras Tourist Bungalow.

IMPACT OF TOURISM

The assessment of impacts of tourist development on Bharatpur city and neighboring areas may be made by classifying the same under the following heads

- Environmental Impact
- Social and cultural Impact
- Economic Impact

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

An assessment of the environmental impact of tourist particularly important, So far as the assessment of environmental impact exerted by the tourist development in Bharatpur keoladeo National park is concerned the following trends have been noted.

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Since the declaration of Bird's Sanctuary as the keoladeo National park so many new construction sites have evolved in the city and its localities to Provide boarding and lodging facility to tourists.

An encircling masonry boundary of stone has been erected and the main gate of the park has been remodeled. Additional accommodation with modern facilities in the Shanti kutir Forest House, Circuit House and the Dak Bungalow (P.W.D) has been provided.

The private persons have also been attracted to construct tourist hotels, restaurants and vishram graha (Rest Houses) in the city. among these Hotel spoon Bill, Shahi Rasoi, Ruchi restaurant, Udai vilas, Kadam Kunj, Surya Vilas, Chandra mahal haveli, swaraj resorts, Laxmi

vilas palace, Bagh resort Bharapur, Ashok forest lodge, Spoon Bill, Sonar Haveli, Udai vilas , Park regency etc. are important additions.

Transport network has also been influenced by the development of the National park. After the erection of the boundary wall around the keoladeo National park in 1982, free entry of the local population in and through the park has been restricted. As a result of it the government has constructed link roads from bharatpur city to these villages.

RURAL ECONOMY

Prior to the construction of these boundary wall animals used to come out of the park and destroy the agricultural crop of the neighboring villages. So many persons used to hunt them also. Now these processes have been stopped. This has not only encouraged the farmers to cultivate their fields but the number of animals has also been increased inside the park.

The enactment of wild Life Act has now totally stopped private cattle grazing inside the park. This has not only beautified the natural landscape of the park but has increased the provision of fodder to wild life in the park premises.

THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL IMPACT

The effects of tourism may be felt not only in the tourist centers but also in neighboring non-tourist towns and in the generating areas.

IMPACT ON POPULATION

During the tourist season from November to April a temporary increase in tourist season from November to April a temporary increase in tourist population results in the lack of accommodation. The increase in tourist population is intensively felt in the morning and evening hours around boating area behind "Shanti kutir", Mansarovar near keoladeo

Temple and along the road between keoladeo Temple and Shanti kutir in the forest Area.

IMPACT ON LANGUAGE AND QUALIFICATION

There are more than five hundred rickshaw-pullers and more than fifty tonga wallas in Bhagalpur city, out of which 32 rickshaw pullers have been issued permanent monthly licenses to get entry inside the keoladeo National park. These rickshaw-pullers have been trained by the forest Department as naturalists.

They have acquired sufficient knowledge regarding the faunal life of the park. Though they are not official guides but unofficially they perform the duty of a guide also. As a result of coming into contact with the foreigners they have learnt to speak certain English words of daily use. Such type of educational impact is very much visible on the workers in hotels and cafes. So many students of Indian universities visit this park for studying the wetland ecology of bird's and herbs.

IMPACT OF SEASONALITY OF EMPLOYMENT

Employment opportunities in tourism have drawn workers from other sectors to the economy, e.g. agriculture, labor sector and business etc. with consequent effects on class or social structure. Jobs, which previously had no cash returns in many societies such as cooking, have now become income earning performing in hotels, thus altering the status of these workers, particularly of labour class.

TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL VALUES

Social values have also been transformed by bringing together of different groups of people, modernization of attitudes among the young arising out of contact with youthful western tourists. is a recent trend of social transformation.

IMPACT ON TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE

The first is almost invisible in Bharatpur, because foreigners do not display their artistic values or their traditions and customs or religious or historical ceremonies in local society. The second influence is very important. The presence of foreign tourists has been stimulating the natural affection to biological life of the local people that was not so important previously for example out of the total visitors to the park some 25% visitors are from local areas increasing the numbers of visitors.

MODIFICATION OF CONSUMPTION PATTERN

Daily patterns of consumption have also been modified to a greater extent. Emulating the tourists, the local residents and naturalists have adopted new clothing styles; begun eating and drinking habits favoured by the tourist or aspire to obtain cameras, binoculars and material goods so casually displayed by the tourist. Some of the more enthusiastic local persons try to get it from them in exchange of money and services.

BENEFITS TO THE TOURISTS

There are so many other benefits accruing to the tourists also. Relaxation, recuperation, recreation, changes of environment, widening of horizons and social contacts. Enrich their health, knowledge, attitude and experience. All this ultimately promotes international cooperation, friendship and a feeling of fraternity and brotherhood.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Development of international tourism in Bharatpur city has created the following economic impacts:

- New employment opportunities

- Increase in income level
- Increase in state Revenue
- Increase in housing prices
- Inflation of land prices
- Seasonal fluctuation in the price of food
- Diversion of capital, land and labour
- Change in agricultural economy

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Tourism is a labor intensive industry and it demands semi-skilled or unskilled labour. Bharatpur city and its neighboring areas are densely populated and they supply this type of labour. Although tourism employment is seasonal or part time in nature, even then the effect of tourism on employment is important as hundreds of persons are engaged for six months from October to March every year.

INCREASE IN INCOME LEVEL

Although tourism is a seasonal activity, but this has led to a massive increase in personnel income levels. Rickshaw-pullers earn on an average Rs. 500 / - per day, when engaged by tourists as he charges Rs. 100/- per hour per tourist.

INCREASE IN STATE REVENUE

Although the income from the National park has increased during the past many years, but the huge amount spent on its development and maintenance shows its growing importance as a fast developing tourist spot.

INCREASE IN HOUSING PRICES

Housing prices vary quickly with the arrival of the tourist season and its departure. The accommodation available in Bharatpur is very limited and sometimes in the month of December and January, when the tourist season happens to be at its peak and the hotels become all compact of tourists, then the

housing prices become exorbitantly high for a day or night stay.

INFLATION OF LAND PRICES

The outward limits of the cities are expanding at a rapid rate. Now the town has crossed its historical limit. Development of the city manifests its expanding boundaries in all sides. The agricultural land has been converted into residential land. This phenomenal inflation of land prices is being experienced only after the declaration of the Ghana Bird's Sanctuary as National park in 1981.

SEASONAL FLUCTUATION IN THE PRICE OF FOOD

The paying capacity of a foreign tourist is definitely much more than that of an ordinary domestic traveler. Thousands of tourist per day visit Bharatpur of which stay at night. Their food habits and tastes are different from the local mass and they are unaware of the prevailing rates too. The businessman's motto is to earn maximum profit, therefore during tourist season. The local supply of fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs is not sufficient to cope up even with the local demand and in tourist season this demand is further increased by the influx of foreign and domestic tourists.

DIVERSION OF CAPITAL, LAND & LABOUR

The spot study of the investors and owners of hotels shows that they have been stimulated to invest their resources such as land, capital, labour an organization in this newly developing industry.

CHANGE IN AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

The creation of Keoladeo National park has not directly influenced the agricultural land-use patterns and other economies based on agriculture, but indirectly its development

process has significant impacts on agricultural economy and other agricultural based economies.

CONCLUSION

Tourism is a recent phenomenon, which has attracted various scientists belonging to different disciplines, Poets, Sociologists, economists and other specialists of different pursuits. Although tourist industry at Bharatpur, being in its infantile stage, has yet to attain its youth, when it shall open all its avenues and perspectives and Bharatpur shall be deemed to be significant industrial complex, playing a vital role in the around development and planning of Eastern Rajasthan. No simple statement can be clearly regarding the impact of tourist development other than that its effects may be diverse and far reaching. Environmental impact is very much visible on the tourist infrastructure in Bharatpur. Domestic tourists have no significant socio-cultural impact on local community worth mentioning, since the behavioral life of both the local inhabitants and domestic tourists has no remarkable contrasts. But the impact of foreign tourists, though their stay is very short, is quite obvious in changing attitudes, attires, behavior, language, dietary system and education. Economic impacts are also directly manifested as creation of new job-opportunities to hundreds of persons, who are making their lives better by economic gains accruing to them by their engagement in tourist activity.

Lastly it will not be out of place to record that still much more may be analyzed and studied of sound and purposeful understanding of this phenomenon.

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