

AMUSEMENT AND LEISURE THEME PARK: THE FUTURE OF INDIAN TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

At a time when the economy has been facing a slowdown in nearly all segments, the amusement parks sector has recorded a growth and their projections show that this trend is going to continue in the years ahead. The amusement industry in India is at a growing stage currently with more and more developments happening in this industry all across the country. The success and growth potential of this industry is resulting into the beginning of new manufacturers of amusement parks' rides in India. This paper explains the future development of the Amusement parks in India, its effect on tourism industry and the rapid growth of tourists towards this industry.

KEYWORDS: Amusement Park, Leisure, Tourism Industry, Theme Park, Essel World.

INTRODUCTION

An Amusement Park or Theme Park is a group of entertainment attractions, rides, and other events in a location for the enjoyment of large number of people. An Amusement park is more elaborate than a simple city park or playground, usually providing attractions meant to cater specially to certain age groups as well as some that are aimed towards all ages. Theme parks, a specific type of amusement park, are usually much more intricately themed to a certain subjects or group of subjects than normal amusement parks.

The last two decades have witnessed interesting evolution of the sector from Appu Ghar that opened in New Delhi in 1984. This was followed by development in major cities with Essel World in Mumbai and Nicco Park in Kolkata, while the early 2000s saw many parks

coming up in small, medium and large cities. The decade also witnessed the emergence of water parks, which became quite popular. Today there are 150 amusement parks in India, across tier I and tier II cities and smaller locations. In the last 10 years at least 40 new parks with varied investments of Rs 5 to Rs 30 crore have been set up in cities other than the metros. Due to large land requirements, most amusement parks are located on the outskirts of the cities.

The Amusement park industry in India is worth Rs. 7000 Crore and has been growing very fast in the last few years. Being an integral part of the Leisure industry the Amusement park industry contributes almost 40% of the total turnover of the entire Leisure industry.

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EFFECT OF AMUSEMENT PARK IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

During the last decade domestic tourism had grown @14% on an average and currently it is estimated at 527 million. Out of this, the Amusement park industry generated only 15 million footfalls during last year. Globally, domestic and international tourists comprise more than 50% of the total footfall at popular Amusement parks. We can, therefore, expect that there would be manifold increase in footfall in amusement parks in India as the large parks in India are gradually converting themselves to larger destination parks with additional investments following the footsteps of large global parks. Currently for a population of 1.1 billion in the country, there are only 120 amusement parks and 45 Family Entertainment Centers. This indicates that the growth potential of Indian amusement and theme park industry is substantial. The high growth potential of the industry in highly populated India will boost tourism, social infrastructure development as well as employment generation. The success and growth potential of the industry is resulting into the advent of new manufacturers of amusement parks rides in India.

A recent market survey research shows that this industry in India is growing at a rapid pace and over 120 amusement parks and water parks are currently in operation in India. Out of them only 15% can be classified in the "Large Parks" category, 30% as medium size parks and balance 55% are small size local parks. Investment of Rs. 10000 Crore are likely to flow in to the domestic amusement and leisure industry sector by 2020 with about 200 new parks are expected to come up across the country. These new parks generate lots of job opportunities.

"Every year, we are seeing a 15-20 per cent growth in the sector-be it the expansion of

existing parks or the setting up of new ones," says IAAPI President Yogesh Dange, who is a promoter of the GRS Fantasy Park in Mysore.

Amusement and Water Parks are spread across the geography of our country and attracts around 30 million visitors per annum. Visitors to these amusement parks are mostly local constituting around 80 percent and the other 20 percent is corporate and large groups. The percentage of international tourists visiting these parks is not substantial but could provide encouraging growth from this untapped potential.

FUTURE OUTLOOK OF AMUSEMENT PARK INDUSTRY

India has evolved very much, in terms of entertainment. With the advancement in technology and extensive use of virtual reality, entertainment has become all-inclusive to the consumers. Especially, the progress observed in Indian lifestyle, has led to emergence of amusement parks as a clip form of entertainment in India. Yet, there is still a marked difference between the quality of amusement parks built in the world and in India. While the West hosts some of the most popular amusement parks such as Disneyland and Universal Theme Park, Indian parks depend on a lot of colors and visual cues, to attract visitors.

In past, Essel world was the only amusement park, but of late, amusement parks have set the bar high, with incorporation of stylish technology and machinery to provide an unrivaled experience, in terms of entertainment. The appearance of such parks has increased the enjoyment of new alternatives in amusement, amongst the youth of India. The addition of hair-raising adventure rides in such parks has garnered attention from the younger crowd.

Currently, Indian amusement park sector is valued at INR 25 billion. As compared to the INR 1,675 billion global amusement park segments, India is at a nascent stage. With large investments proposed in the theme park sector on both on Public Private Partnership (PPP) basis and by private players. Approximately INR 297 billion is proposed to be invested in the Indian amusement park sector in the coming years. Presently, the Amusement parks have been divided into 4 sectors, denoting the 4 geographical positions of the country. Leading in north is Oysters', Gurgaon. In the south, Wonderla Bangalore. For West, Essel world Mumbai is still garnering attraction, owing to its first amusement park appeal. While in East, Nicco Park, Kolkata has revolutionized entertainment with education, gaining the moniker "Disneyland of East".

Seeing the success of the amusement park enterprises, industry analysts have predicted that 200 more amusement parks are in pipeline. By 2020, the industry is expected to grow by Rs 15-20,000 crore, cementing the belief that India's worship concern with amusement parks is bound to continue for a significant while. The Indian amusement and theme park industry is set to more than double revenues to Rs 4,000 crore from Rs 1,700 crore now in annual revenues by 2020. The sector is growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.5% over the past few years, according to industry body The Indian Association of Amusement Parks and Industries (IAAPI), the sector is currently at approximately Rs 1,700 crore has been growing at a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.5% over the past few years.

Speaking to DNA, Ajay Sarin, president, IAAPI and managing director, Hindustan Amusement Rides Pvt Ltd, said that the sector has picked up

pace in the last few years as players have been creating compelling experiences. "The present growth has been achieved over a revenue base of Rs 700 crore four years ago. While there are quite a few projects that are under development across the country, the current players are also expanding their offerings. The combined effect will lead to significant growth for the sector in the coming years."

CONCLUSION

Amusement parks are an essential part of the global leisure and entertainment industry. The industry can be broadly categorized into amusement parks, theme parks and water parks. The sector can also be largely segmented on the basis of the catchment area that they cater to, along with the type and scale of activities they offer. Global amusement parks can also be classified on the basis of the concepts and themes around which a park/offering is designed such as thrill & adventure, sports & edutainment, amongst a few. Indian amusement industry is expected to grow more in near future. More and more investment in the industry can be expected. The entertainment industry is ready to invest in India as it's considered as a very potential region in terms of business.

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