



## Strategies to enhance competitiveness of Indian tourism industry through promotion of youth tourism

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**Abstract:** Indian tourism industry is a growing service sector industry which is expanding by leaps & bounds. There is a great optimistic growth as travelling has become a ladder to upward mobility of the people from lower middle class to upper middle class stratum. Youth especially the student can contribute to positive growth of tourism as they have potentialities. India is a youthful country with nearly half of its population being young. But the potentialities of youth as determinants of youth tourism have not been taken seriously. The sidelining of youth has had its impact on growing tourism sector. This paper examines the imperative significance of youth tourism & considers supportive strategies to popularize Youth Tourism.

**Keywords:** Youth tourism, determinants of youth tourism, challenges, supportive strategies

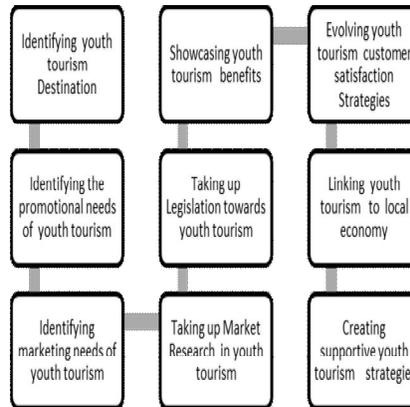
**Introduction:** Youth tourism encompasses several issues as it has multi-dimensional approaches. Beginning from identifying tour destination to linking it national economy is a very long process. Youth tourism is a new, fast growing sector in the tourism industry Youth tourism is young travelers having preference for budget accommodation, emphasis on meeting other travelers, independently organized, flexible travel schedule and longer rather than brief holidays.

Youth tourism can be seen through modern initiatives including travel, backpacking, youth hostels, working holiday programs, education, student flights, cultural exchange, backpacker transport, adventure tours, volunteering, internships, student travel insurance, youth travel agents, tourism boards,

8. Linking youth tourism to local economy
9. Creating supportive youth tourism strategies

internet cafes, language courses, student identity cards and student exchange (World youth student and educational travel 2009).

1. Identifying youth tourism Destination
2. Identifying the promotional needs of youth tourism
3. Identifying marketing needs of youth tourism
4. Taking up Market Research in youth tourism
5. Taking up Legislation towards youth tourism
6. Showcasing youth tourism benefits
7. Evolving youth tourism customer satisfaction Strategies



Youth tourism provides several linked support such as Heritage tourism, Cultural tourism, Medical tourism, Business tourism, Sports tourism including adventure tourism.

#### Objectives of Youth Tourism sector

1. The main objective of **Youth Tourism sector** is to develop and promote tourism, maintain competitiveness of India as tourist destination and improve and expand existing tourism products to ensure employment generation and economic growth.
2. Providing information about various **Youth Tourism** destinations, modes of youth travel, youth hostel accommodation and approved travel agents.
3. Creating tourism awareness about Youth Tourism among youth to travel across the country through study tours, project tours, field tours, package tours, business tours etc.

**Tourism sector** is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and providing 8.78% of the total employment. India witnesses more than 5 million annual foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourism visits.

The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 US\$150 billion in 2013-2014 and is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of tourism in India and maintains the "Incredible India" campaign. ( World Travel and Tourism Council 2009 -2010 ) . According to World Travel and Tourism Council, India will be a tourism hotspot from 2009-2018, having the highest 10-year growth potential. As per the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 by the World Economic Forum, India is ranked 11th in the Asia Pacific region and 62nd overall, moving up three places on the list of the world's attractive destinations. It is ranked the 14th best tourist destination for its natural resources and 24th for its cultural resources, with many *World Heritage Sites*, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, and strong creative industries in the country.( The report of the Indian tourism sector 2013 ) . India also bagged 37th rank for its air transport network. The India travel and tourism industry ranked 5th in the long-term (10-year) growth and is expected to be the second largest employer in the world by



2019. Indian Tourism sector is receiving good number of indigenous & foreign tourists specially youth & it is enhancing every year. Youth Tourism can be made an attractive segment of travel visit through promotional marketing. Undertaking marketing campaigns, both foreign & indigenous youth tourists can be attracted. ( The report of the Indian tourism sector 2013 ) .

The number of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) has grown steadily in the last three years reaching around 4.48 million during January–July 2015. Foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) from tourism in terms of US dollar grew by 3.2 per cent during January-July 2015 as compared to 1.9 per cent over the corresponding period of 2013. FEEs during the month of July 2015 were Rs 11,452 crore (US\$ 1.74 billion) as compared to FEEs of Rs 10,336 crore (US\$ 1.57 billion) in July last year. Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) between January-July 2015 were US\$ 11.41 billion compared to US\$ 11.06 billion in the same period last year. The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms in January-July 2015 was 6.9 per cent (**India in Business** – Ministry of external affairs, Government of India Investment & technology promotion division. 2015).

#### **Investments**

The tourism and hospitality sector is among the top 15 sectors in India to attract the highest foreign direct investment (FDI). During the period April 2000-May 2015, this sector attracted around US\$ 8.1 billion of FDI, according to the data released by

**Tourism campaigns:** The famous tourism campaigns have famous taglines campaigns to attract tourists.

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

With the rise in the number of global tourists and realising India's potential, many companies have invested in the tourism and hospitality sector. Some of the recent investments in this sector are as follows:

- Fairfax-owned Thomas Cook has acquired Swiss tour operator Kuoni Group's business in India and Hong Kong for about Rs 535 crore (US\$ 85.6 million) in order to scale up inbound tour business
- US-based Vantage Hospitality Group has signed a franchise agreement with India-based Miraya Hotel Management to establish its mid-market brands in the country.
- Thai firm Onyx Hospitality and Kingsbridge India hotel asset management firm have set up a joint venture (JV) to open seven hotels in the country by 2018 for which the JV will raise US\$ 100 million.
- ITC is planning to invest about Rs 9,000 crore (US\$ 1.42 billion) in the next three to four years to expand its hotel portfolio to 150 hotels. ITC will launch five other hotels - in Mahabalipuram, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Colombo - by 2018.
- Goldman Sachs, New-York based multinational investment banking fund, has invested Rs 255 crore (US\$ 40.37 million) in Vatika Hotels.
- Japanese conglomerate Soft Bank will lead the Rs 630 crore (US\$ 95.6 million) funding round in Gurgaon based OYO Rooms.



A 99% Fun and 1% Land – Lakshadweep
A New Experience – Jharkand
Amazing Heritage Grand Experiences – Uttar Pradesh
Beautiful Bengal – West Bengal
Blissful Bihar – Bihar
Enchanting Tamilnadu – Tamilnadu
Everything’s Possible! – Andhra Pradesh
Full of Surprises – Chattisgarh
Go Goa – Goa
God’s own Country - Kerala
Haryana – A Pioneer on Highway Tourism
Incredible India – India Tourism
India begins here – Punjab
Jewel of India – Manipur
Land of Festivals – Nagalan
One State, Many Worlds – Karnataka
Peaceful Pondicherry, Give time a break – Pondicherry
Scenic, Serene, Sublime- The Soul of Incredible India! – Odisha
Simply Heaven – Uttarkhand
Small but Beautiful – Sikkim
The Heart of Incredible India! – Madhya Pradesh
The incredible state of India – Rajasthan
The Land of Dawn lit Mountains – Arunachal Pradesh
Unforgettable Himachal – Himachal Pradesh
Vibrant Gujarat – Gujarat

- Make My Trip will acquire the travel planning website Mygola and its assets for an undisclosed sum, and will together look to focus on innovating the online travel segment.

#### Government Initiatives

The Indian government has realised the country’s potential in the tourism industry and has taken several steps to make India a global tourism hub. Some of the major initiatives taken by the Government of India to give a boost to the tourism and hospitality sector of India are as follows:

- Government of India plans to cover 150 countries under e-visa scheme by the end of the year besides opening an airport in the NCR region in order to ease the pressure on Delhi airport.

- The Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVoA) scheme enabled by Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA), launched by the Government of India on November 27, 2014 for 43 countries has led to sharp growth in usage of the facility.

- During the month of July, 2015 a total of 21,476 tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 2,462 during the month of July, 2014 registering a growth of 772.3 per cent.

- During January-July, 2015 a total of 1,47,690 tourist arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 14,415 during January-July, 2014 registering a growth of 924.6 per cent.

- The Government of India has set aside Rs 500 crore (US\$ 79.17 million) for the first phase of the National



Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY).

- The 12 cities in the first phase are Varanasi, Amritsar, Ajmer, Mathura, Gaya, Kanchipuram, Vellankani, Badami, Amaravati, Warangal, Puri and Dwarka.
- Under 'Project Mausam' the Government of India has proposed to establish cross cultural linkages and to revive historic maritime cultural and economic ties with 39 Indian Ocean countries.

**Role of youth in promotion of youth tourism** – Youth can play an important role in promotion of a tour destinations. Youth can be very stimulated to travel & are often like to spend time in visiting new locations.

1. **Adopting to expanding information and communications technologies (ICTs)**- Youth have to be encouraged to adopt to expanding information and communications technologies (ICTs), in particular for small enterprises in their local areas. For instance, local temple which has been in a dilapidated condition can be made to attract tourists through good showcasing. Students can write an informative description about it in newspapers, draw the attention of the local administration to renew it, can join hands to renew, can make use of social media to assist in repairs & maintenance. etc.

2. **Fostering dynamic entrepreneurship** - fostering dynamic entrepreneurs taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the recent reforms, which have created a market-oriented environment for European farming creating new outlets for local and forestry products, including the development of renewable energy

materials, biofuels and processing capacity. improving the environmental performance of local destinations, promoting environmental services and animal-friendly farming practices.

3. **motivation towards undertaking entrepreneurial task** - Youth can be motivated to undertake entrepreneurial task in handicraft, apparel designing, toy making, folk items, traditional ware, agro processing, handmade agarbattis, health care products, cosmetics, confectionaries etc can enhance local economy as well as promote youth entrepreneurship.

4. **Encouraging young women** - Encouraging young women to participate in culinary, cuisine, cookery, catering etc will have a positive effect as well as promote part time / full time employability.

5. **Promotion capacity building** - Promotion capacity building through integrated initiatives combining diversification, business creation, investment in cultural heritage linked tourism destinations, infrastructure building for local services, combining adventure tourism destinations as part of rural tourism, promoting recreational tourism, etc can be supportive.

6. **Role of government policy making**- Governments both regional & central, can promote youth tourism through developing micro-business and handicrafts, which can build on traditional skills or introduce new competencies, helping to promote entrepreneurship and develop the economic fabric of the region as well as country.

7. **Catering to training needs** : training young people in skills needed for the diversification of the local economy can be very accommodating. Youth are enthusiastic, receptive, dynamic & are



favoring to change .Hence their potentialities can be best infused with good training . Youth can be trained in technological inputs. They can be facilitated in IT supported devices which can promote youth tourism across the globe. Social media, Smart phones, technological innovations can be best adapted by youth. Youth can make the best use of e-business and e-commerce as a linkage bridge to promote youth tourism. Thus major telecommunications, transport, energy and water infrastructure to suit the needs of tourism destinations can be beneficial.

8. **Building local partnership-** Youth should be motivated towards building local partnership, mobilizing local potential, promoting private-public partnership, promoting cooperation and innovation, encouraging entrepreneurship and promoting inclusiveness. These can be a part of curriculum. Government can stimulate youth to start amusement parks , recreational game play grounds , hilarious team games play stations , youthful musical stations , game parlors , pool hub , etc. Youth can be trained to become travel guides , travel agents, travel transport service providers , travel managers , travel operators , travel culinary agents, travel booking providers, travel information providers , etc & can become a focal point in promotion of tourism among youth.

**Conclusion** – Thus youth tourism as a new branch of Indian tourism Industry can be a powerhouse in adding to GDP growth. With the advancement of digital literacy , there is a great variety of innumerable opportunities for youth to develop as youth tourism

entrepreneurs . India is a youthful country with nearly half of its population being young. The never failing potentialities of youth as determinants of youth tourism have to be considered seriously. The stream lining of youth has as harbingers of youth tourism can boost growing tourism sector in India . Involvement of youth in tourism policy making can be prospective & can yield good results in future. There is a need to monitoring imperative significance of youth tourism through considering supportive strategies to popularize Youth Tourism.

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