

## Positioning a State as a Tourism Destination - A Case Study of Jharkhand

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### Abstract

*Even though the true potential of the tourism sector, not only as a revenue generator to the country but also as a major employment generator, has been recognized by different sections of the society, the necessary measures to remedy this situation fall short of expectations. The scenario can be remedied by initiating certain measures. Creating a better infrastructure, communicating right information, utilization of existing resources and creating a secured environment are expected from the Government. Inculcating a sense of responsibility to behave well with tourists and encourage them to revisit the rich cultural heritage sites are crucial. The importance of tourism, though being realized by various states has still not created the will that can really make them realize the potential. Jharkhand state in the Eastern part of the India is one such state that can do a lot with its tourism potential but still it is lagging behind. The present study has been carried out to underscore what the State's potential in tourism sector and how to enable it to achieve that.*

**Key Words :** Tourism Industry, Effective Positioning, Jharkhand, Heritage, Emerging Economies

### Introduction

Travel is today developing as one of the world's largest industries according to the World Travel and Tourism Council. It has been estimated that 10% of all jobs and GDP is contributed by this sector globally. Worldwide, travel and tourism sector encompassing transport, accommodation, catering, recreation and services for visitors is the highest priority industry and is emerging as

one of the largest employers. The industry is human resource intensive capable of creating quality jobs across the full employment spectrum accounting for 8.7% of global employment. In 2005 the industry garnered revenues to the tune of \$6tn. Today there are 76.7 million travel and tourism industry jobs and 234.3 million jobs in the travel and tourism economy and these will raise to 89.5 million Travel and Tourism Industry jobs

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and 279.3 million travel and tourism economy jobs by 2016.

India is fast becoming a popular tourism destination with record growth of 13% in year 2006 in comparison to year 2005 as 4.43 million people visited India from various countries against 3.93 million. It has its direct impact in foreign exchange earnings. In duration of one year (2005-2006) there was a phenomenal increase of 14.6 percent from US\$ 6,569.34 million as against US\$ 5,730.86 million. Though these are encouraging signals about the Indian tourism sector, there is another side to this story. There is a huge gap between the untapped potential and the reality. If we make a comparison with our Asian neighbour, we will find significantly larger volume of International visitors in these small countries such as Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. Singapore could successfully attract 8.94 million tourists and generated revenue of \$10.8 billion, Thailand hosted 15.3 million tourists and generated more than 5, 25,000 million Bhats, while Malaysia attracted 16.43 million tourists in 2005 and generated revenue of Ringgit 31,954.1 million. Further, even neighboring China have a share of 4.3% of world tourism's earnings, India, with an comparable diverse culture and heritage, has a share of only 0.89% in world tourism's earnings.

This discernible difference and the huge untapped potential provide opportunities to both the government and other stakeholders of the tourism industry. This less return of true tourism potential is often attributed to a lack of promotion of its tourism destinations.

Tourism has been a neglected area hitherto in our country. Of late, though, the Government has identified the revenue earning potential of tourism as an industry and has stated giving some real improvements. The 'Atithi Devo Bhav' campaign of Ministry of Tourism is slowly but surely picking up, yet, lot has to be done. Against this backdrop the present study aims to carry out a strength analysis of Jharkhand, one of the newer states of the country which has potential but it is not able to capitalize on that.

## About the State

On 15th November 2000, the Jharkhand state was formed by carving out 18 districts of the erstwhile southern region of Bihar commonly known as Chotanagpur plateau into a separate block. Some other areas were also included in this but by and large districts falling in Chotanagpur region comprise the state. Today the state has 22 districts and its capital is Ranchi, the place which earlier used to be the summer capital of Bihar.

As the name Jharkhand implies, this new state has large

stretches of forest and greenery. In fact, in a way the division of Bihar has worked to the advantage of Jharkhand as the state consists of 46 percent of the land area of erstwhile Bihar while taking around 33 percent share of the population. Land locked by Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the state has a total area of 79, 714 square kilometers which is pre dominantly Rural, 79 percent of united Bihar now fall in Jharkhand. It is one of the few states, which have a surplus budget.

When Jharkhand was a part of Bihar, the region was known for rich mineral deposits and rulers from Patna were only interested in exploiting the mineral wealth of the Chotanagpur plateau. No attempt, what so ever, was made to promote the natural beauty that was so bountiful here - the rich forests, the beautiful hills, the lush green ambience, the pleasant weather, and the variety of vegetation. Whatever tourism was taking place it was in the name of religion. So Baidyanath Dham the famous temple of lord Shiva and Parasnath, the seat of Jain Tirthankar Parshwanath were the two most celebrated tourist attractions that attracted largely religious crowd. There was no attempt to promote pleasure or vacation tourism. In fact, few were aware, that the region had tremendous potential for eco-tourism, the in thing today.

With the formation of the new state, tourism potential of the state can be exploited to the hilt. 'Beauty' as is popularly said is in the beholders eye", and is largely perceived and suggestive. One of the World's most famous waterfalls is Niagara falls and it is only around 175 feet high. Compare this with world's highest cascade; Venezuela's Angel falls at 3200 feet or even our own Indian one, the Jog falls of Karnataka, at 830 feet. This is what marketing does. And this is what the state needs to do - aggressive marketing.

## Tourism Potential of the State

The state has a tremendous potential for tourism. Its tourism strength lies in several areas. There are some very famous Pilgrimage sites that attract people from all over the world. Parasnath situated some 45 kilometers from the industrial town ship of Dhanbad attracts Jain devotees from the entire globe. However the interesting fact is that it is a fantastic site for pleasure tourism as well. The seat of famous Jain Tirthankar Parshwanath, the place has temples of all the Jain Tirthankars situated at the top of the Parasnath hills, a group of hillocks that attracts crowds loving hiking and adventure seeking trekkers in big numbers. For the families, too, the place has tremendous attraction. So from tranquility and divine peace to mundane pleasure, the place is a hot spot. With some effective marketing it can become an

internationally acclaimed tourist attraction.

Baidyanath Dham, the famous abode of Lord Shiva, is well known. Popularly called Baba Dham, the place is the seat of one of the twelve jyotrilingas of Lord Shankar and the legend has it that Demon King Ravana established it. A world famous pilgrimage for the Shaivites. Baidyapath Dham is situated in Deoghar town which is well connected with rail as well as road. However, apart from pilgrimage, it is a beautiful place for pleasure tourism. Today Baidyanath Dham is famous for the huge crowd of Lord Shiva's devotees popularly called 'Kanwarias' who come all the way from their respective places to carry the water from the River Ganges at Sultanganj and pour it on the Shivalingam at Babadham. Many of these Kanwarias make a journey of around a hundred kilometers on foot. All dressed in saffron they present a wonderful sight.

There are two very famous abodes of Goddess Durga in the state that attract devotees from all over India. Maithan near Dhanbad and Rajrappa near Ramgarh are two very important Pilgrimages. The interesting coincidence is that these places too have tremendous potential for pleasure tourism.

The state thus has the potential to attract tourists of every hue and colour. The only requirement is to market its tourism potential aggressively. An analysis of the tourism potential of the state is carried out in the ongoing lines to present a clear picture.

## Jharkhand's Rich Heritage

Jharkhand has the potential to become a very popular tourism destination given the various tourist attractions it can offer. In fact there is something for every kind of tourism in the state-right from pilgrimage to eco-tourism. Jharkhand has places, which are famous pilgrimage sites. Apart from Baidyanath Dham and Parasnath mentioned earlier there are a number of religious places, which can be developed into very important pilgrimage sites.

While Rajrappa, Maithan are well known many more such places are there that can attract devotees in large numbers. In fact many of these places can be popular heritage sites also, given the history. Near Dhanbad, around a distance of 25 kilometers there is a small town Nirsa. In Pandra village of this town there is Kapileshwar temple that has a history of thousands of years. This temple of Lord Shiva is also called Panch Pandeshwar temple as it is supposed to be built by Pandavas (famous heroes of the Mahabharat era in the Dwapar Yuga according to Hindu Mythology). The legend goes that the Pandavas spent some time here during their forced exile after the famous defeat in the great gamble

with Duryodhana. This temple has five Shiva lingas established by the five Pandava brothers.

Another important religious site is Litori Sthan, the temple is an incarnation of Goddess Durga. It is situated at around 12 kilometers from Dhanbad. The place attracts pilgrims from near by regions. This temple also has an old history of hundreds of years.

There is another important Pilgrim site near Topchachi some 30 kilometers away from Dhanbad. This is the Mazar (Grave) of a Fir (saint) called Baba Hazrat Abdul Shah. Many people flock here for boon. Though Baba was a Muslim the devotees who throng here every day cut across religion. With a bit of marketing this place can be developed into a popular site.

In fact, there are several such places, which have a long history and were built by legendary rulers. Basukinath, near Baidyanath Dham is another important place that attracts pilgrims who come to Baidyanath Dham. This is also a temple of Lord Shiva. In fact, Shiva and Durga temples are more common in the region and the erstwhile rulers built these temples taking into account the popular psychology of the people. The interesting thing is that these sites are situated in remote areas and can become important centers for pleasure tourism given the ambience. Most of the famous temples are surrounded by beautiful hills or are atop a hill or near a river or in a forest. With a lot of packaging and marketing they can easily become centers of tourist attraction.

Some of the important tourist attractions of the state are given below:

- Religious places - Baidyanath Dham, Parasnath, Rajrappa, Maithan, Basukinath, Litori sthan, Shakti Mandir, etc.
- Pleasure sites - Parasnath, Basukinath, Trikut hill, Nandan hill, Maithan Dam, Panchet Dam, Tilaiya Dam, Rajrappa, Ramgarh, Hundru falls, Jonha falls, Usri falls, Gautam Dhara, Dimna Lake, Dasham falls, Topchanchi, Masanjore Dam, etc.
- Health resorts/retreats -Netarhat, Ramgarh, Ghamaria, Parasnath, Angada, Ghatshila, Hazaribagh, etc.
- Wild life/forests - Ghatshila, Hazaribagh, Koderma, Chaibasa, Gumla etc.
- Eco-tourism - Netarhat, Hazaribagh, Chaibasa, Ghatshila, Rajmahal hills etc.
- Miscellaneous - Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, Indian School of Mines, Indian Lac Research Institute, BIT Mesra, BIT Sindri, Coal Mines, Forests etc.

The above-mentioned list is suggestive and not

exhaustive. The places mentioned above are already popular and with aggressive marketing these can grow into well-known national tourist sites. Another important aspect is that there are lesser-known sites that can be developed into important sites with the help of customized marketing.

Generally, it is effective to market a particular site as a package i.e. offering different things to different class of tourists. For example, Parasnath. This hill complex can be packaged as a site for pilgrimage, heritage, eco-tourism, health resort, adventure etc. Most of the sites in Jharkhand are of this category.

Apart from these sites for different classes of tourists, Jharkhand, contrary to popular belief is not just barren, hilly and fruitless forests. It is culturally very rich and if the right packaging is provided the state can be an attractive destination for cultural tourism. In addition heritage sites, depicting life and styles of indigenous people, the tribal, can be developed. Folk songs and Folk dances of Jharkhand are significant culturally and can compete with the other popular dances like Kathakali and Bharatnatyam, etc., of Southern India. The 'Chhou' Dance Ceremonially inaugurated on the last day of Chaitra (a month in the Hindu Calendar coinciding with March-April) is a case in point. This dance is performed at the open courtyards attached to shrines of village Gods.

The State has some thing to offer to the historians, the naturalists, the anthropologists as well as the Indologist. The region is extremely important from anthropological point of view. The basic population comprises four principal groups, viz., the Bhumij, who call themselves Sardar, the Mura, generally known as Mundas, the Santhal, and, the Kurmi, known also as Mahato or Kurma Kshatriya. They are all independent groups of people who in most cases show cultural affinities.

The Mura worships the Sun God in the name of Sing Bonga, the same God who is worshipped in the name of Dharam by the Bhumij. Sing Bonga is the Supreme God of the Mura. There are other Gods lower in rank like Marang Buru, the Mountain God.

The Mura of Manbhum is most ardent participants in Chhou dance. With practically no education and social advancement the members of this community have been performing this art, which is based on the episodes of Ramayana and the Mahabharata and the Indian classical literature most faithfully, in some cases, for generations. Mura is the trainer of the "Ostad" in many cases. Sometimes the entire village, however poor, inhabited exclusively by the Mura, sacrifices its hard-earned resources for the cause of organizing Chhou dance parties. Their passion for dance and eagerness

to preserve its character considering it to be a very sacred duty of each of them is indeed very remarkable. The episodes are being handed down through the generations only orally and each performer of the dance considers it his sacred duty to preserve the tradition. But their day-to-day life is otherwise hard.

The ruins of the Jain and the Buddhist temples scattered throughout this region bear testimony of a very ancient culture of this area. Here Buddhism followed Jainism as is evident from a large number of temples. This region played an important role in history during the period of ascendancy of Jainism and Buddhism in India.

That Chhou dance of Manbhum has a very ancient origin can also be guessed from a comparative study of the origin and development of two other ancient forms of Indian dance -Manipuri and Kathakali. Both these forms were integrated in the socio-cultural life of the people of the respective regions of their origin and they developed with the progress of the socio-cultural life there. Manipuri dance had advanced the cause of India's cultural integration, on the one hand with Burma, and, on the other hand with Bengal, on the basis of its own tribal character. The Kathakali has also a homologous history. It has also incorporated into it -tribal, folk and classical cultural elements, in the course of the development of the country's cultural life. The Chhou dance is not an exception, and therefore, unless the ancient history of Manbhum is explored to some national extent, the story of its origin and development will be difficult even to guess.

Showcasing these through cultural fests can go a long way in development of Jharkhand as a tourist destination. But before all this can be done it is very important to address the weaknesses of the state that discourage tourism. First and foremost is the image of the state as ill-managed, terrorist infested unsafe state where travel is highly risky. This may be true in certain measure in some areas but it cannot be generalized for the whole state. The state also is known for poor infrastructure that includes power shortage, communication road connectivity and other basic facilities. This image again is a dampener. It is important for the state to promote the state as a safe and comfortable destination.

The state government needs to act fast. The boom period of tourism is here and it is prudent to catch up with the mood and wallet of the middle class whose propensity for fun and enjoyment, pleasure and adventure is growing by the hour.

Timely action needs to be taken as threat in the form of competition from other states is intensifying. Even governments of Bihar and West Bengal have gone for

aggressive marketing of their respective states as tourist destination. Uttranchal, Chattisgarh are other contenders who are eyeing for a share in the growing tourism market. In addition the established tourist destination like Goa, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have gone for the kill. These are no mean threats and image building of the state has to begin in the right earnest and right now. When Rajasthan can think of promoting tourism in rural areas one can well imagine the kind of competition that is there in the tourism market.

## Tourism in Jharkhand

Tourism can be a major source revenue and economic sustenance for not only the country but various states, too. Particularly the ones that enjoy bounty of the nature. Kerala has already done it. Himachal is doing it. Even states like West Bengal are aiming at it. With the Government of India loosening its purse-strings for the first time to spend \$ 2 million on an electronic media campaign aimed at luring tourists to India, it will be interesting to see how tourism is being harnessed by States.

The Jharkhand State comprising 22 districts of mineral rich Chotanagpur Plateau of the erstwhile southern region of Bihar has been endowed with bountiful natural resources. In fact, it has the 90 percent of the mineral reserves of the whole country. These facts, however, are well known. But, what is not known is the reality that Jharkhand State has the potential to become a highly attractive tourism destination. This has to be marketed.

Given the number of beautiful tourist spots that the state has, if the Jharkhand Government takes proper steps tourism can be developed into a major revenue earner for the state's kitty, creating income generation opportunities in primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.

With the creation of a separate state of Jharkhand on November 15, 2000, tourism is being viewed as an important department of the government. In the erstwhile Bihar, southern region comprising the Jharkhand was only important for minerals. But the Jharkhand government is now realizing that the state can become an attractive tourist destination.

Tourism is now viewed as one of the key sectors of economic growth and development in the state, both from the point of view of income and employment generation as well as a source of revenue for the state.

It may be pointed out that in a very short duration after the formation of the state, the government of Jharkhand analysed the potential for developing the state and took some concrete steps to promote and develop tourism in

the state. It had announced a forward-looking tourism policy, which clearly recognizes the strengths and weakness and potential of tourism in the state. This tourism policy is not merely a policy statement but is an attempt to analyse the tourism potential and strengths, of Jharkhand along with the weakness and challenges, which lie ahead.

The strengths and assets of Jharkhand clearly are pilgrimage, cultural tourism, heritage, eco-tourism, adventure tourism and wellness.

The challenges are the augmentation of infrastructure facilities with particular focus on improving air, rail and road connectivity, and development of new tourist destinations, enhanced private sector participation, an aggressive and well planned publicity and marketing strategy, a more action-oriented tourism administration and management, year round tourism and the more active participation of local host communities.

On the basis of the analysis, a road map for the development of tourism in the state is being drawn up. The first and the foremost step taken was to abolish the tourism directorate (which was an age old bureaucratic organization totally out of tune with the latest trends and development in the tourism sector) and replace it with Jharkhand Tourism Development Board (JTDB), through an Act. This board was to have the benefit of experts from the tourism sector who would advice and guide the government in tourism related matters. The JTDB was supposed to work professionally to look after divisions pertaining to projects formulation, finance and investment, and publicity and marketing. However, the progress is still very tardy.

In order to ensure planned development and growth, a master plan approach needs to be adopted. Though the state government did initiate several steps to improve the air, rail and road connectivity a lot still needs to be done. Air connectivity of the state is poor and Ranchi is the only city having an airport that connects to some states and cities of the country.

## What Needs to be Done

True, the state government has realized that tourism can be a major revenue earner for the state. But a lot needs to be done.

What is required is to get the basics right first. Specifics can follow. Moreover, once the basics are taken care of the strategies for promoting tourism at various sites can be dealt on case-to-case basis.

The tourism product is different from other products. A tourism product is the combination of tourism services and offerings being provided by the different

constituents of the tourism industry. The landscape, Lush Greenery, Wildlife adventure, stay in hotel, traveling, festival, tradition and culture of the host country/destination, etc. constitute the invisible and intangible structure of the tourism product. These must be identified and properly classified.

The government of Jharkhand should first study the prospects of tourism in a scientific way. The following issues are important-

- Understanding the tourist needs, wants, tastes and attitudes
- Achieving sustainable growth in tourist arrivals
- Increasing tourist traffic during lean seasons
- Attempting to increase the length of stay of the tourist
- Dispersing tourist to new destinations and
- Enhancing image and popularity, etc of tourism destinations.

### **Some Major Areas Where Action is Required**

So, what are the hurdles that need to be overcome for promoting tourism in Jharkhand. First of all Tourism in Jharkhand has not yet received the focus of a state activity. Tourism Development in Jharkhand is also affected by the fact that awareness and sensitivity about the potential of tourism has not percolated to all sections of the society.

The following ground realities should be kept in mind about the state.

- Inadequate & poor quality of infrastructure
- Carrying capacity by air, road and railways
- Clean and comfortable lodging facilities at reasonable prices
- Trained guides and tourist amenities of international standard
- Adequate entry points
- Positive image building abroad
- The need to preserve the heritage and natural resources
- Safe and secure tourism,

Now keeping these ground realities in mind, what should be the action plan for Jharkhand? The future action programme should revolve around creating adequate infrastructure of international standard to make arrivals easy and a pleasurable experience.

### **Conclusion**

In little over a decade, India has become one of the significant emerging economies. Its economy is growing at over 8 per cent a year, making it the fastest growing free-market democracy. Indian industry is ticking along at double digits, while services sector continues to lead the overall growth surge. It is tourism, however, which has recorded the highest levels of growth - more than 15 per cent per annum over the last three years.

It is now recognised that India's economic growth has to be employment-driven and blend with social equity. Tourism has the capacity to capitalize on the country's success in the services sector and provide sustainable economic growth over the long term. It can stimulate most economic sectors through backward and forward linkages and cross-sectoral synergies. A recent study by National Council for Applied Economic Research reveals that tourism's contribution towards GDP (both direct and indirect) is 5.9 percent, and towards employment (both direct and indirect) 8.78 percent.

Opening up of the skies and a successful branding and positioning campaign 'Incredible India' have driven the growth of tourism in India. Air transport is a driver of economic development. The economic stimuli of airlines, airports and direct affiliates beyond their direct impact can be expressed using output and employment multipliers. The states, too, need to pick up their cues.

The new policy initiatives have led to emergence of low-cost carriers for the benefit of consumers. Tourism has benefited from private Indian carriers operating on international routes. A major development, for instance, has been direct operations of international flights to smaller cities such as Varanasi and Gaya. Something similar needs to be done for Jharkhand. The need is the creation, development and management of an international brand - a powerful brand that cuts across boundaries and cultures with ease.

While it is easy to position and brand a single destination like Maldives, Mauritius and Seychelles, it was extremely difficult to establish a clear identity for a multi-product, varied destination like India. India is bigger than 23 countries of Europe and every single state of India is unique. Incredible India has to be the mother brand with states establishing their own brand entity and emerging as sub-brands. Incredible India captures the underlying spirit of the country; its culture and spirituality.

There can be little doubt that Jharkhand state has the potential to become an exciting tourist destination. But the important point is that the policy makers will have to consider a variety of approaches to ensure that the state is showcased properly. The state needs to be positioned



properly and in this endeavour the support of travel agents, tour operators, travel writers, representatives of travel and hospitality industry associations, experts in the tourists and cultural sectors, diplomats, journalists and other opinion leaders is crucial.

Effective positioning depends on a number of factors that together determine the attractiveness of the tourist destination. Positioning must promise the benefit the customer will receive, create the expectation and offer a solution to the customer's problem.

Positioning as the first step should identify and select markets or segments that represent business potential. This must be based on thorough knowledge of needs, wants and perceptions of the target market along with the benefits offered by the destination. A few crucial questions must be answered. They are:

- What is important to the target market?
- How does the target market perceive the destination?
- What attributes should a destination use to differentiate itself to make the best use of its limited resources?

The reality of the matter is that if the target market doesn't perceive the image, the image does not exist. If the target market does not believe that what the destination has to offer is a benefit, it isn't a benefit. If the target market doesn't believe that the benefit can be delivered, promises are meaningless. If the benefit isn't important to the target market, it isn't important. If the benefit is not perceived as being different from that of the competition, then differentiation has not succeeded. In short, images, benefits, and differentiation are solely the perception of the tourist, not the perceptions of tourism officials or the tourism marketer. It is the mind of the tourists where a space has to be created.

But mere positioning is not enough even if it is the crucial first step. Providing high quality products and services is what is required. In the case of tourism this means the tourist sites and hospitality arrangements must satisfy the tourist. So the state government needs to go for development of new sites, facelift of existing sites and sprucing up the hospitality arrangement. Attempts are on in this regard but lot more needs to be done. Already the state government has initiated steps to develop a beautiful park at the mining town of Kiriburu in West Singhbhum on the lines of the famous Jubilee Park of Jamshedpur. Similarly Akarshani Devi temple at Saraikela in Kharsawan district is being developed on lines of Vaishno Devi temple. There efforts are going to pay rich dividends. However, careful planning and organizing is required for effective management and exploitation of tourism potential is to be achieved.

Before making any action plan for tourism the ground realities like inadequate and poor infrastructure, clean and comfortable lodging facility at reasonable charges and the carrying capacity of airlines, rail and road transport etc. need to be taken care of. However of late several states have proved that tourism marketing can work wonders as far as increasing the tourist inflow is concerned. Kerala, Goa, Himanchal have all come up with innovative ideas. They are harnessing the benefits too. The newly formed states like Uttaranchal, Chattisgarh and Jharkhand can take a cue from their older counterparts and make tourism a money-spinner for their states. More so, as tourism is catching up as fashion and passion with the Indian middle class.

In light of the above, Jharkhand state needs to market tourism in right earnest in order to exploit the potential that present. There is need for careful, systematic and long term perspective.

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