CHAPTER FIVE

RAILWAY TOURISM PRODUCT OF INDIA

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REFERENCES
If the tourist product is interpreted in its widest sense as everything that the tourist consumes not only at the destination but also enroute to the destination, the railway in India fulfills at least two aspects of the total tourist product,

i) As a means of transport to reach the destination, providing the link between the tourist-generating area, and the tourist destination area; and

ii) As a tourist attraction in itself.

As a means of transport, the railway has been the preferred mode of tourist travel in India. Not only in the past did the tourists preferred railways, but even today a major portion of both domestic as well as foreign tourists choose railways in India to fulfill their travel needs.

The importance of Indian Railways in tourism in India does not lie only in its reach or just as a means of transport for carrying tourists to the places of interest. It can also be promoted as a tourist attraction in itself. The heritage of Indian Railways, acquired through 150 years of its history, is a nostalgic experience for tourists. Its steam engines, its old colonial railway stations, bungalows, unique constructions and many other works of genius are potential tourist attractions. Today Indian Railways has become a treasure house of locomotives, saloons, buildings etc., which bear an enormous nostalgic appeal among tourists both within and outside the country and proper exploitation of these assets for promoting tourism will be extremely rewarding. It also has many hill railways to its credit, which have hardly any match in the world. Many of them are still run by steam locomotives giving them a unique edge. The major tourist attractions, which Indian Railways boasts of, may be divided into the following:
5.1 Hill Railways

The hill railways of India, with narrow tracks zigzagging on what might have once been cart tracks, are certainly romantic. An antique steam engine hauls up the train slowly, huffing and puffing all the way. Within a few hours the train reaches a colorful railway station surrounded by snow caped peaks, waiting to be conquered. There are five railways in India that ply in its hilly regions. These trains offer a rare experience of rail travel popularly known as 'journeys to paradise'. These hill railways are:

5.1.1 Kalka-Shimla Railway (KSR)

Shimla, the former summer capital of British India and the present day state capital of Himachal Pradesh, is an important destination of holiday makers. Situated at an attitude of 2,076 meters, Shimla offers a panaromic feast to visitors, who get to experience the grandeur of Himalayas.

The idea of a railway line to Shimla dates back to the introduction of railways in India. In ‘Delhi Gazette’ of November 1847, a correspondent sketched the route of a railway line to Simla (now Shimla) with estimates of the traffic returns etc., in a very professional style. He predicted that if a railway line was built between Shimla and Kalka one might see a shift in the seat of government to a more salubrious spot (Shimla). This prophecy indeed came true and Shimla became the summer capital of British India.¹

Shimla was connected to the Shivalik foothills at Kalka in the early years of 20th century. Kalka was already connected to the rest of the country by a broad gauge line. The railway line to Shimla, built on a narrow gauge track was completed and opened up for traffic on November 9, 1903. The 96 km long line passes through 107 tunnels, crosses more than 800 bridges and viaducts, and is one of the most beautiful hill railways of India. KSR was
considered the ‘crown jewel’ of railways in India during the British times. KSR offers a panoramic feast to the travelers from the Shivalik foothills at Kalka to important points such as Dharampur, Solan, Kangra Ghat, Taradevi, Bargo, Salogra and Summer Hill near the towering peaks. The travel by train on this line has unparalleled charm.

Till 1956 the trains on this line were hauled by steam engines, which were then replaced by diesel and petrol powered locomotives, as these were technologically advanced and more efficient than steam locomotives. However, these could not retain the charm and the nostalgic appeal, which the steam engines had created for long since their inception. For last many years now there have been discussions to conserve steam heritage on this line. This could be done by restoring the old steam locomotives on tracks rather than to put them on display in the museum galleries. The serious efforts by steam-railway enthusiasts bore fruit and an original steam locomotive was restored on the line for heritage tourism trips on November 9, 2003, to celebrate the centenary of the KSR. However, the other trains on the line are still hauled by diesel locomotives.

There are four premier train services available on KSR, which are:

5.1.1.1 Deluxe Rail Motor Car

It is a delight as it resembles a bus of the World War II vintage. It carries 14 passengers at a time and takes 4.25 hrs to reach Shimla from Kalka. The car is fitted with a transparent fiberglass roof for a clear view of the sky and the travelers can look up at rain or snow without being soaked. There are many technologically advanced instruments in the car, which give the traveler valuable information while traveling, such as digital time-cum-temperature display unit, altimeter and route indication board etc.
5.1.1.2 Shivalik Deluxe Express

Shivalik Delux is a connecting service to Hawrah-Kalka Mail for Shimla. It accommodates 120 passengers and reaches Shimla from Kalka in 4.45 hrs. The coaches are equipped with wall-to-wall carpeting, wide glass windows and reversible cushioned chairs. Improved lighting and a music system create a pleasant atmosphere. The passengers are given a complementary meal at the picturesque ‘Barog’ railway station, which is included in the fare.

5.1.1.3 Shivalik Palace (Tourist Coach)

This coach is specially designed for tourists and holidaymakers. The coach provides a luxurious ambience for a dream holiday. It can accommodate a group of six persons. The coach is furnished with state-of-art facilities, such as. folding cushioned beds, refrigerator, on broad kitchen and dining table with cushioned chairs etc. The fare on this luxurious coach includes complementary accommodation of two luxurious retiring rooms at Shimla for the day and free meals enroute.

5.1.1.4 Shivalik Queen

A comparatively late entrant on Kalka-Shimla line it is divided into two portions consisting of two coupes each. The coach is equipped with ultramodern facilities and fittings like wall-to-wall carpets, altimeter, fancy lights and chrome plated luggage-rakes etc.

Table 5.1 shows different stations on KSR and their height from the sea level.
Table 5.1: Stations on KSR and their Height from Sea Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station Name</th>
<th>Height (in meters)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shimla</td>
<td>2,075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Hill</td>
<td>2,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoghi</td>
<td>1,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salogra</td>
<td>1,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solan Brewery</td>
<td>1,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barog</td>
<td>1,531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumarhatti Dagshai</td>
<td>1,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharampur Himachal</td>
<td>1,469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kalka</td>
<td>6,56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.1.2 Kangra Valley Railway

The other hill railway section in Northern India is the Pathankot-Jogindernagar section, popularly known as Kangra Valley Railway, which is the rail approach to the beautiful Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh. Kangra valley draws not only tourists and nature lovers, but also has a special appeal for the religiously inclined, as it is the earthly abode of several gods and goddesses. Keeping the traveling comfort of its visitors in mind, a new luxury narrow gauge train, ‘Kangra Queen’, has been introduced on this section. The train covers the 128 km distance from Pathankot (in Punjab) to Jogindernagar (in Kangra valley) in approximately 4.25 hrs, including two stoppages enroute, one at Jawalamukhi road and other at Kangra. The ‘Kangra Queen’ consists of four coaches, one First Class, two Chair Cars and one Second Class, with a total seating capacity of 92 passengers. The First Class coaches and Chair Cars are furnished with comfortable sofa sets and chairs and have wide glass
windows. There are other facilities provided on board such as newspapers, mineral water, tea, snacks, food etc. A public address system is provided in all the coaches for playing music and giving information about the places enroute.

5.1.3 Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR)

Darjeeling is a popular tourist destination in India. It is a hill resort in the north of West Bengal. 'Darjeeling, Darjiling or Dorje-ling' means the place ('ling') of the Dorje (the mystic thunder bolt of the lama religion) and is connected with the cave on the Observatory Hill.

Until 1865, Darjeeling could be reached from Siliguri only via Pankbari road, a steep and winding track only negotiable by foot or pony. The growing pressure of demand for transportation for tea and increased movement of people to and from Darjeeling highlighted the inadequacy of the road from the plains. A hill cart-road was built up between 1863 and 1865, which enabled Darjeeling to open up commercially, leading to greater demands for increased communications. Before Siliguri was connected by railway in 1878, traveling from Calcutta to Darjeeling was a nightmare. The whole journey took five to six days and was about as exhausting and uncomfortable a journey as can be imagined.

In 1878, history was made when Franklin Prestige, the agent of Eastern Bengal Railway (EBR), formulated a plan for the construction of a railway line from Siliguri to Darjeeling and succeeded. Prestige's confidence was based on the belief that a line could substantially reduce the cost of bullock cart transport between the plains and Darjeeling. Soon after the construction was started, the 85.05 km (about 54 mile) rail link from Siliguri to Darjeeling was completed by July 1881. Darjeeling Steam Tramway was formed, which latter became Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company (DHR) on 15th September 1881. This
company remained effective until the line was taken over by the Government of India on October 20, 1948. It became a part of the Assam Railway and was absorbed as a constituent of the newly grouped North Eastern Railway (NER) on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1950. Because of the further regrouping the DHR was transferred to the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) in 1958.

The earliest locomotives which hauled on this line came from Atlas Works at Manchester. The early passenger vehicles had canvas roofs and wooden benches. There were First Class carriages for 6 passengers, Second Class carriages for 8 and Third Class trolleys for 16 passengers each. The third class trolleys were open, with side and end curtains.

The toy train, which today runs on DHR is not merely a source of delight for the young and the old, but also represents the engineering skills of the highest order. The first of its kind in India and among the first few of this kind in the world, the railway line from Siliguri to the beautiful hill station of Darjeeling is considered as an engineering feat. This section with a great nostalgic appeal and a great heritage value, has been bestowed 'World Heritage Site' status by UNESCO at 23<sup>rd</sup> session of the 'UNESCO World Heritage Committee' meeting held in Morocco at the end of November 1999.<sup>6</sup>

The railway line is laid more or less on the same alignment as the hill cart road, which criss-crosses the line at several locations. The line between Sukna and Darjeeling is almost all along located on the road-bench either skirting or on the far edge of the road except at a few locations where the road and rail formations are on different levels and follow a different alignment. Out of the total of 87.48 km (from New Jalpaiguri to Darjeeling), about 64 km is on the same road bench. The actual climb on DHR starts from Sukna, from where it starts encountering steep gradients and curves all the way long. There are
some peculiar features to be marked during the journey uphill. The train passes through the lush green and dense forest from Sukna, from where at many places, a clear path is hardly seen. The climb is mainly through reverses and loops. There are 5 such reverses and 3 loops. The most famous loop being the 'Batasica Loop' between Ghoom and Darjeeling. Apart from this the section has 5 major and 498 minor bridges. There are 177 level crossings where the hill cart road and the railway line criss-cross each other. There are 13 stations on this line, including New Jalpaiguri, with an average inter-distance of 6 to 7 km.

The DHR line starts at an altitude of 500 ft at Siliguri to reach an altitude of 7,407 ft at Ghum. From Ghum the line descend for the final 5 km distance to reach Darjeeling, situated at an altitude of 6,812 ft. There is a continuous uninterrupted climb from Siliguri to Ghum. Ghum has the distinction of being the second highest railway station in the world and the highest railway station in the world to be reached by a steam locomotive. DHR also runs a joy ride train between Ghum and Darjeeling with a stoppage at Batasica Loop for enabling tourists to take photographs of Kanchenjunga (second highest mountain peak in the world). Table 5.2 shows the stations in the section with their distance from Siliguri Junction. It also gives the altitude of each station.
Table 5.2: Stations on DHR, their Distance from Siliguri Junction and Height from Sea Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Distance from Siliguri Junction (in km)</th>
<th>Altitude from sea level (in ft)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>-7.42</td>
<td>480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siliguri Town</td>
<td>-4.99</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siliguri Junction</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukna</td>
<td>10.06</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rongtong</td>
<td>17.70</td>
<td>1,404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Dharia</td>
<td>29.77</td>
<td>2,822</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gayabari</td>
<td>36.20</td>
<td>3,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahanadi</td>
<td>42.08</td>
<td>4,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurseong</td>
<td>49.48</td>
<td>4,864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tung</td>
<td>56.92</td>
<td>5,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonada</td>
<td>64.97</td>
<td>6,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghum</td>
<td>74.03</td>
<td>7,407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>80.06</td>
<td>6,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


5.1.4 Neral-Matheran Railway (NMR)

Matheran means 'the wooded head' or the 'jungle topped'. It is a hill resort at an altitude of 800 meters (about 2700 ft), a distance of about 110 km away from Mumbai on Mumbai-Pune rail route. This hill resort was practically unknown until 1850, when Hugh Malet of the Bombay Civil Services explored it. To him also belongs the credit of making it a popular hill resort of the
British Raj. However, it was Lord Elphinstone, the then governor of Bombay who laid the foundation of the future development of Matheran as a hill station.

It was in the year 1907, that Matheran was connected to Neral through a 2 ft narrow gauge hill railway. This hill railway was built by Sir Adamjee Peerboy, who formed a limited company with an authorised capital of 10 lakh rupees divided into 2000 shares. The railway line from Neral to Matheran is 20 km (12.6 miles) long with a riding gradient of 1 in 20. The route is noted for its unbelievable curves and the first sharp curve is marked by a large notice, which reads, ‘Oops! what a curve: 45 feet radius.’ The track zigzags up the hill, bringing into view the beauty of the Mathem hill. The trains on this line were earlier hauled by steam locomotives, which have now been replaced by diesel engines. But it is still a singularly pleasurable journey as the hill station can only be reached by train, which is the only mechanised source of transport to this hill resort. It is unique in its kind as being the only hill station in India, which has no road transport and can only be reached by train. The lack of vehicular traffic makes Matheran free from petrol and diesel fumes and cacophony of cars and buses and an unusual and peaceful retreat from the noise and congestion of Mumbai.

The train wheezes up the Western Ghats into the clear mountain air, where one gets a breathtaking view of the hills and plains below. There are four pairs of trains which run sunrise to sunset. However, during the monsoon season, which stretches from mid-June to mid-September, the trains are discontinued and out of the four pairs of trains running between Neral and Matheran, only one pair of trains is run to open timings.
5.1.5 Nilgiri Mountain Railway (Mettupalaiyam-Ootacamund Railway)

‘Udagamandalam’ or ‘Ootacamund’ or ‘Ooty’ is a famous hill station in the ‘Nilgiri Hills’ of Tamil Nadu in South India, popularly known as ‘queen of the Indian hill stations’. Ootacamund is a corruption of the word, ‘Utaka-Mand’, which means a ‘Mand’ or collection of quaint huts in which aboriginal tribes of ‘Todas’ lived.

Located at 2,287 meters above sea level, the hill station was discovered by the English in 1920s and was hailed with a reputation as being a miraculous giver of health, even of life itself. Lord Lytton, viceroy from 1876 to 1880, while staying in the government house in this paradise, wrote ecstatically to his wife —‘it far surpasses all that its most enthusiastic admirers and devoted lovers have said to us about it, the afternoon was raining, and the road muddy, but such beautiful English rain, such delicious English mud. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire dawn, Westmoreland lakes, Scotch trout streams and Luritanian views’.

In 1899 this picturesque hill station was connected by a narrow gauge rail link to the foothill point of Mettupalaiyam, from where the ascent towards Ooty starts. Mettupalaiyam was already connected to mainline through Mettupalaiyam–Podanur branch line, which was opened for traffic in 1873. Although first plans were made to build a mountain railway from Mettupalaiyam to Nilgiri hills as early as in 1854, it took the decision makers 45 years to cut through the bureaucratic red tape, and the section of the line between Mettupalaiyam and Conoor was completed and opened for traffic in June 1899.

This section was operated and managed by Madras Railway (MR) under an agreement till South India Railway Company (SIR) purchased it. The SIR
later extended this line, over the same gauge, from Conoor to Ootacamund – a distance of 11.75 miles – in the year 1908.

The railway line from Mettupalaiyam to Ooty is a total of 45.88 km in length and lies partly in the Coimbatore and partly in the Nilgiri district of Tamil Nadu, on the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats. The line starts from Mettupalaiyam, at the foothills of Nilgiri mountains at an altitude of 330 meters above sea level and traverses through dense forests and steep slopes to reach Ootacamund at an altitude of 2,287 meters from sea level. The average gradient of this line is about 1 in 24.5.

The line is laid on a meter gauge track with many sharp curves, the sharpest being 17.5 degrees. There are 250 bridges on the section, out of which 32 are major ones and 15 are road over/under bridges. The 46 km long section is covered in four and a half (4½) hours. The maximum permissible speed on Mettupalaiyam-Kallar and Conoor-Udagamandalam ‘non-rack’ sections is 30 kmph, whereas between Kellar-Conoor ‘rack’ section the maximum permissible speed is 13 kmph.

The ‘Nilgiri Toy Train’ trekking across plains, plantations and forest-clad hills, has acquired an overwhelming appeal not only among Indians but also among the people abroad. The appearance of this mountain railway in David Lean’s memorable film ‘A Passage to India’ supports this fact. The film which is based on E M Foster’s famous classic novel of 1924, ‘A Passage to India’, was filmed in Ooty and Conoor. An ‘X’ class Swiss locomotive number 37395 was repainted in black livery and christened as ‘Chanderpore 103’ of Marber line to haul the train, consisting of 27 original passenger carriages.

The Southern Railway, which runs and manages the Nilgiri Himalayan Railway, has taken many steps of improvement not only on the tracks but also
off the tracks, like providing accommodation facilities for the comfortable stay of the tourists at different points. The accommodation units, such as the one at Ooty railway station, are facilitated with all the modern means of comfort and convenience like, baths with hot/cold water, running water, room heaters and restaurant facilities etc.

5.1.6 Upcoming Railway Project to Kashmir

The valley of Kashmir is the only region in the country, which is at present not connected by railways. Commonly called ‘paradise on earth’, the valley has been the tourists’ delight for centuries. The lack of an efficient and safe means of transport between the valley and the rest of the country has always been a stumbling block in the movement of tourists into the region. The region is presently connected by air and road. The 296 km long road link from Jammu (the winter capital of Jammu & Kashmir) to Srinagar (the summer capital of the state) traverses through a highly difficult terrain, which remains closed for days together, due to heavy land-sliding during monsoons and heavy snowfall during winters. The road journey is covered at an average speed of 35-40 kmph by small vehicles and 25-30 kmph by buses and coaches. Though presenting a panoramic view of valleys and mountains enroute, the journey by road is very exhausting and cumbersome, thus demanding a tourist to be more adventurous.

The upcoming railway line project between Jammu and Srinagar, which is expected to be in place by August 2007, will definitely change the traveling scenario in the region. The journey time will be reduced and the journey will be more comfortable and relaxing than the road travel. Although the project was approved as early as in 1981 but due to the impossibly difficult terrain and paucity of funds, got delayed for years. In ‘Railway Budget 2002-03’ the
project was revived and a special grant of Rs. 5,500 crore was made available for its implementation. The project has now gathered steam, stoked by engineering capabilities, cash and a can-do spirit fostered by the Konkan Railway Corporation (KRC), Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and IRCON. The railway link to the valley, once in place, will open up the economy of the region, which is heavily dependent on tourism. The railway line will traverse through a very difficult terrain with 109 tunnels and, 164 major and 620 minor bridges including the one over River Chenab, which is 1.2 km long and 380 meter high – possibly the highest in the world. Among the 109 tunnels the longest one will be under Pir-Panjal mountain ranges with a length of 12.5 km at a height of 1,830 meters from sea level. The line is expected to remain open throughout the year, unlike the road link, as much of its stretch is under tunnels and the open line passes through hard and safe rocks, therefore reducing the risk of land sliding. The railway line will be an engineering marvel, which will not only open up the economy which is heavily tourism-dependent through reduced journey time and comfortable transport, but will also be a destination in itself. The railway line to the valley will have an immense tourism potential like other hill railways in the country.

5.2 Luxury/Heritage Tourist Trains

Towards the beginning of 1980s, the Ministry of Railways after realising the enormous potential of rail-based tourism in the country contemplated introducing certain specific tourism projects for attracting foreign tourists on such sectors of the Indian Railways that held great attraction for the tourist market abroad. As a result of this, the Ministry of Railways decided to introduce certain luxury trains, which would reflect the splendor and opulence of the carriages of erstwhile maharajas and British rule. The 'Palace on
Wheels' was the first in line to be introduced under this project, followed by ‘Royal Orient’ in later years. Thereafter, ‘Fairy Queen’ was introduced under this concept; however, it was introduced specifically to revive the steam heritage of the country.

5.2.1 Palace on Wheels (PoW)

Indian Railways in coordination with Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC) launched ‘Palace on Wheels’ as a special luxury-cum-heritage tourist train for providing a unique and memorable experience to the tourists visiting Rajasthan. PoW, as a unique holiday train hauled by a steam engine was inaugurated on 26th January 1982 and started its regular commercial operations from October 1982. Initially introduced as a heritage train, it consisted of thirteen original saloons that were custom-built personal coaches of erstwhile rulers of the princely states of Rajputana, Gujrat, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the viceroys of British India. These coaches were not being used by the Indian Railways after independence in normal passenger trains on account of their very rich and traditional interiors.

In the year 1991, a new air-conditioned meter gauge PoW on the lines of the old heritage train was launched with fourteen saloons, two restaurant cars, a kitchen car, a bar-cum-lounge car and four service cars. The fourteen saloons are named after different former Rajput states. The fourteen saloons are made up of 104 passenger berths in twin bedded cabins, each with channel music, intercom, attached toilet, running hot and cold water and a shower. The train takes the tourists on 7 nights/8 days all-inclusive package from Delhi through many places in Rajasthan to Agra in Uttar Pradesh and ends up at Delhi on the 8th day. A detailed description and its working has been discussed in the forthcoming Chapter Six.
5.2.2 Royal Orient

Royal Orient is a luxury train run as a joint venture between Indian Railways and Tourism Corporation of Gujarat. This project was started in the year 1994. The rake used on Royal Orient is actually the replacement rake of PoW, which served PoW from 1991 to 1994. In 1994, when the broad gauge rake for PoW was introduced, the newly built replacement rake was rendered idle. In the same year, Tourism Corporation of Gujarat and Indian Railways came up with a plan to jointly operate a train on the lines of PoW through Gujarat, using this replacement rake. Thus Royal Orient was introduced the same year and the original white livery of the rake was changed to blue scheme. The maintenance of the rake is done by the Western Railway (WR) workshop at Ajmer.

Royal Orient is a gold-embossed thirteen saloon carriage, fully air-conditioned train with vestibule facilities. It runs on a 7 nights/8 days all-inclusive tour package, through the exotic states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, with its start and end points at Delhi Cantonment Railway Station. Each saloon on the train has four comfortable large coups with adjoining washroom facilities and a lounge fitted with a television and a video recorder. Each cabin is furnished with broad beds and plenty of storage space. The washrooms are supplied with hot and cold water round the clock, which ensures the tourists a refreshing bath at the end of a day of sightseeing.

The food is served on board the train in two aesthetically decorated dining cars – the ‘Sasan Gir’ dining car and the ‘Velvadar’ dining car. The ‘Sasan Gir’ dining car with mud-plastered paneling is studded with pieces of embedded coloured-glass, creating a rural ambience. On the other hand, the ‘Velvadar’ dining car is decorated with more staid and elegant furnishings,
reflecting the gymkhana-dining saloon of the erstwhile maharajas. The tourists are served Oriental and European cuisine prepared by specially trained chefs. There is a bar on the train, which serves a variety of drinks. The train also has a library, which gives tourists a quiet and laid back time.

The itinerary on Royal Orient is conveniently drawn up. It moves during the night and halts at the sight during the day, where the tourists are taken out on sightseeing by coaches. The journey covers three major locations in Rajasthan and important destinations of tourist interest in Gujarat. The places covered in Rajasthan are, Chittaurgarh, Udaipur and Jaipur, whereas the destinations covered in Gujarat are Mehsana, Ahmedabad, Sasangir, Ahmedpur, Mandvi Beach, Palitana, Sarkhej, Ranakpur, Junagarh, Veraval and Delwada etc.

5.2.3 Fairy Queen

One of the most enduring images of India is that of a hardworking smoke-billowing steam train moving gracefully along in a rural setting. This image is best represented by the ‘Fairy Queen’, which sets out on a two day all-inclusive weekend package tour from Delhi Cantonment station to Alwar in Rajasthan, a one-way distance of 143 km. From Alwar the guests are taken to Sariska Tiger Reserve for an overnight stay. The ‘Guinness Book of World Records’ in 1998 recognised ‘Fairy Queen’ as the oldest working locomotive in the world.

‘Fairy Queen’ built by Kitson, Thompson & Hewitson of UK rolled out for the first time for East India Railway Company (EIR) in 1855, just two years after the first train was run in India in 1853. The locomotive was an ode to human technology in an era of cargo and mail delivery by horses or on foot. The locomotive served EIR for 54 years till it was taken out of operation in
1909. It was in the year 1996 that the National Rail Museum in coordination with Indian Railways took up the challenge of getting the locomotive restored in heritage interest, and to make it the oldest working locomotive, in main line, anywhere in the world. The maintenance and restoration work took an entire year and in 1997 started functioning as a moving train. The inaugural run of the train was carried out on 8th October 1997 and set out on its first commercial run on 15th November 1997.

The revival of 'Fairy Queen' was conceived primarily to develop heritage interest among railway enthusiasts and as an exclusive tourist train for a journey back into time. The locomotive belonged to an era when the speeds were hardly 15 kmph. However, after the trial run of 'Fairy Queen' it was permitted to run on a maximum speed of 40 kmph. The locomotive being a primary attraction was initially not visible from the coach, therefore, modifications were carried out in 1998 to put glass on front and sides of the front coach. This helped the tourists to view the locomotive steaming ahead through the glass-front while relaxing and enjoying the hospitality on board.

The project has received appreciation from rail heritage enthusiasts throughout the world. It won the national tourism award for most innovative and unique tourism venture in 1999. The international council of Pacific Area Travel Writers Association (PATWA) selected 'Fairy Queen' as a heritage venture for award at International Tourism Borse (ITB) at Berlin in 2000.

5.2.4 Deccan Odyssey

The southern delight on rails, 'Deccan Odyssey', is a joint venture between Indian Railways and Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). The luxury train is built at a cost of Rs 32 crore, equally shared by Indian Railways and MTDC. The train furnished with soft, peach designed
upholstery and aesthetically sculpted teakwood furniture, welcomes guests into a world of opulence on a seven-day package. The menu on the train is tailored to match the passing landscape. The train comprised of thirteen carriages includes, two presidential suits, 48 deluxe suits, two lounge-cum-conference cars, one specialty restaurant and bar, and two massage-cum-beauty saloons. During the 7 night/ 8 day package the tourists are taken from Mumbai on day one, to visit Ratnagiri on day two, Sindudurg on day three. On day four the tourists are taken to Goa, on day five to Pune from where they are taken to Aurangabad on day six. On the seventh day the tourists are taken to Ajanta & Nashik and on the last day (day 8) the tourists return to Mumbai.

5.3 Konkan Railway

Konkan is a coastal strip of land bound by the Sahyadri Hills on the east and Arabian Sea on the west. It is a land with rich mineral resources, dense forest cover and a beautiful landscape fringed with paddy and, coconut and mango trees. The ecological diversity and the scenic beauty of the region have an immense tourism potential.

The construction of the 760 km long broad gauge Konkan Railway made the long cherished dream of millions of people of the Konkan region come true. Before the construction of the Konkan Railway, the region had no proper means of transportation. The road transport to the region was not so developed as to exploit the tourism and economic potentials of the region. The early pioneers of railway in India did not construct a railway system towards the south from Bombay. They might have considered it expedient to climb the Lonavalla Ghats from Bombay and reach Pune first, than to go for a direct link along the west coast. There seemed to have been two compulsions for this choice. First, to connect the Bombay Port with its hinterland, so that rich
minerals and raw materials could be brought from the interiors for shipment. Second, the daunting engineering challenge posed by the route along the west coast towards the south, particularly in fording the innumerable creeks and rivers and in scaling the many formidable hill ranges reaching out to sea from the Western Ghats.

The first ever railway line on Indian subcontinent from Bombay to Thane opened to traffic in 1853. A broad gauge line from the south reached Manglore in 1907. But the stretch along the west coast between Bombay and Manglore remained devoid of any railway line for more than a century, except a few feeble attempts made to extend the line from the Bombay end in slow stages, first from Diva to Panvel in 1964, then from Panvel to Apta in 1966 and finally from Apta to Roha in 1986. However, it was only in October 1984 that the Ministry of Railways decided to take a final location engineering-cum-traffic survey for part of the west coast from Manglore to Madgoan, a distance of 325 km. In March 1985, the railway decided to enhance the scope of this survey to cover the remaining length of the west coast line from Madgoan to Roha. The Southern Railway submitted the project report for this route, which was dubbed as Konkan Railway (named after the coastline it passed through) to the Ministry of Railways in 1988. In the first phase, the portion between Manglore to Udupi, a distance of 69 km, was included in the Railway Budget of 1989-90. The remaining length of the project from Udupi to Roha was included in the 1990-91 Railway Budget. The Konkan Railway is at present a 760 km long broad gauge line from Roha to Manglore, with 53 stations on the line.

Konkan Railway traverses through an ecologically diverse and picturesque landscape, making the journey along this route a pleasant and
enjoyable experience for tourists. The shortened time span and the easy accessibility to inland tourist spots or beach-fronts along the picturesque coastline offer opportunities for travel not contemplated earlier and contribute to a booming tourist trade. In an effort to make the region more accessible to tourists, important super-fast trains like Delhi-Trivandrum Rajdhani Express have been diverted over to Konkan Railway.

In a region that has immense potential for tourism, Konkan Railway can act as a catalyst for its growth through attracting both domestic as well as foreign tourists. It passes through three states, viz. Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka, and also touches the Northern border of Kerala. All these states are endowed with immense tourism potential of diverse character, ranging from history and culture, to wildlife and adventure, and to sun-beaches and backwaters. Many of these spots are untouched and pristine. Until Konkan Railway came on the scene, many of these tourist spots were inaccessible except to hardy explorers, willing to suffer the discomfort of exhausting road journeys.

5.4 Railway Museums

Heritage is associated with culture, traditions, values and the way of life, of the people from whom it is acquired. It is of social, cultural and economic relevance for the present and the future generations, as it is the indicator of various phases of development in the society. Therefore, heritage has to be conserved for posterity.

Indian Railways boasts of 150 year long history, through which it engineered social revolution, brought national integration and transformed the economy. The heritage acquired by Indian Railways, ever since its inception in 1853, has a great nostalgic appeal not only for the rail enthusiasts, but also to all others. It has a great tradition in its steam engines, old colonial railway
stations, railway bungalows and unique constructions etc. It has acquired a
treasure of unique locomotives, saloons of erstwhile maharajas and colonial
rulers, buildings, ghats and other works of genius, which has made it second to
none in the world in terms of heritage value. The vast heritage of Indian
Railways, undoubtedly, bears an immense heritage value; and the proper
exploitation of its assets in this area could be extremely rewarding, in both
economic and conservation terms.

The need for conservation of the vast railway heritage in India was
conceived as early as in 1932, when it was proposed to set up a railway
museum of national level and international repute at Dehradun, the capital city
of present day Uttranchal state. This proposal, unfortunately, could not take
shape and finally in 1968, the Union Ministry of Railways took a landmark
decision to set up ‘National Rail Museum’ (NRM) at New Delhi. It was
envisaged that the old rolling stock of immense heritage value would be
preserved and displayed at this museum.

During the later years it was felt that NRM would not justify the space
for the large number of items spread over the length and breadth of the country.
Therefore, it was decided to set up regional rail museums at different places
throughout the country. As a result the regional rail museums were set up at
Mysore, Chennai, Vadodra and Nagpur. The Union Ministry of Railways has
also recently approved the proposals for setting up regional rail museums at
Varanasi, Pune and Malda etc.

5.4.1 National Rail Museum (NRM), New Delhi

NRM is located in the posh diplomatic enclave of Chanakyapuri in New
Delhi. The setting up of this Museum was decided by the Union Ministry of
Railways in 1968 and the foundation stone of the museum was laid on 7th
October 1971. The work was completed in the year 1977 and the various items of old rolling stock were moved into the museum from different parts of the country. The museum was inaugurated and made open for the public on February 01, 1977.

Spread over about 10 acres of land the museum has a very rich collection of antique steam locomotives, princely saloons, coaches and wagons and other railway items of historical importance and public interest. The museum is well designed and efficiently structured to meet the requirements of the visitors. The well-laid out museum yard with lush green gardens full of flowers that are a treat for the eyes has become a visitors' paradise. Around 1000 people visit this museum every day, and a good portion of them consists of foreign tourists. The museum is popular not only among the children but also amongst the keen railway enthusiasts who find its collections to be amongst the best in the world. For an ideal rail enthusiast this is the ideal place to learn about the history and development of railways in India.

The Museum also provides the visitors a combination of learning and pleasure with considerable scope for entertainment. A ride on the romantic toy train, the steam hauled ‘Patiala Mono Rail’ train and time to relax at the floating cafeteria etc., provide visitors ample scope for enjoyment. The management is taking regular steps to keep the museum in a perfectly fine shape at all times. The museum is proving to be a growing attraction for tourists, both domestic and foreign. However, there is no separation of data for domestic and foreign tourists. The number of visitors to the museum is given in Table 5.3.
Table 5.3: Number of Visitors to NRM During 2002 and 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of visitors</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Increase over 2002</th>
<th>%age growth over 2002</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>44,123</td>
<td>1,01,641</td>
<td>57,518</td>
<td>130.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>73,082</td>
<td>162,894</td>
<td>89,812</td>
<td>122.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,17,205</td>
<td>2,64,535</td>
<td>1,47,330</td>
<td>125.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: National Rail Museum, New Delhi

The figures in Table 5.3 reveal that a significant number of visitors visit the museum. The total number of visitors to the museum in 2002 stood at 1,17,205, consisting of 44,123 adults and 73,082 children. The number of visitors increased to 2,64,535 in 2003, consisting of 1,01,641 adults and 1,62,894 children, registering an overall growth of 125.70 percent. The number of children increased from 73,082 in 2002 to 162,894 in 2003 registering a growth of 122.89 percent as against 44,123 adults in 2002, which increased to 1,01,641 in 2003, showing a growth of 130.36 percent. The interesting fact as revealed by these figures pertains to the number of visits made by children which form a major portion of the total visits made. In the year 2002 about 62 percent of the total visits made to NRM were by children. During the year 2003 about an equal percent share, i.e., 62 percent of the total visitors comprised of children. The higher share of children in total visitor figures is indicative of the educational importance of the museum.

The rail heritage items at display combined with the number of other entertainment facilities available at the museum, for example a ride on the toy train or Maharaja of Patiala’s State Monorail train and provision of boating around the floating cafeteria etc., are big attractions for children. Since NRM has made its appeal among the tourists both within India and abroad, it is
coordinating with rail enthusiasts, travel agents and tour operators, media, museum professionals, event managers and publicity agencies to increase its popularity and present it to the tourists as a rail heritage destination.

To bring in tourists, NRM has designed circuit tours from airports, hotels and city centers to its premises and offers travel agents a commission on these packages. The agents are also given a commission of 25% on gate-entrance charges if they bring in tourists outside these circuit packages. NRM has also made several efforts to attract and engage the tourists in different activities at the museum and to give them an actual taste of the steam legacy. It runs two miniature steam locomotives on the first Saturday of every month. These display models depict the actual puffing run of the steam locomotives.

The museum has in its possession the ‘Patiala State Monorial’ train, built in 1907 as a maharaja’s fancy, which is still in running condition. The train was a unique form of transport, as it was originally hauled by mules. This train, which has been preserved at the museum, consists of one locomotive and one coach. The train runs on a single track with one wheel running on the road, which is made parallel to the track. The train is run in the museum every day in the afternoon and the visitors are given an actual experience of the bygone days.

In October 1995, NRM commissioned a token operated train system, assembled by Byculla S & T Workshop of Central Railway. This system, which is made children friendly, can be operated by the children on their own through the token machine. A year before, in 1994, a whistle section, comprising of whistles of steam, diesel and electric locomotives was commissioned in this museum. The children can operate the whistles of these locomotives and can hear the real sounds made by locomotives on run. NRM
has shown a special concern for the handicapped, particularly handicapped children, by opening some special sections for their entertainment with appropriate convenience. A special road vehicle has been inducted in the museum to enable handicapped visitors go around the museum. This is, in fact the first major step taken by any museum in India.

NRM offers its visitors a best combination of heritage, education and entertainment. The visit to the museum promises to be stimulating, enlightening and entertaining for education, excitement activities, reading, research, videos, leisure, romance, nostalgia and picnics. It also celebrates the ‘Children’s Day’ each year, by organising on-the-spot drawing and painting competitions exclusively on the railway themes. Through this the younger generation is made acquainted with India’s vast railway heritage. This will, undoubtedly, induce heritage consciousness among the younger generations and in a long run will help in the preservation of this enormous rail heritage.

NRM can broadly be divided into two parts as Open-door Gallery/Yard and Indoor Gallery. Both of these together make a good sampling of the history of Indian Railways and provide an excellent opportunity for researchers, rail enthusiasts, tourists, individuals and institutions to cover the whole era of Indian Railways at one place. With its wide range of valuable exhibits at display, it provides its visitors an excellent opportunity for a journey into the past. All the exhibits are in their original attire, colour and livery, of the company or the state to which these originally belonged.
5.4.1.1 Indoor Gallery

The indoor gallery in the museum is devoted to the display of various small exhibits, working and dummy models, coats of arms, records, historical documents, photographs and charts depicting the development and growth of railway in India since its inception. The railway’s contribution to the industrial development of the country is also depicted in the indoor gallery, in a systematic and pictorial manner. A separate section has also been set up to focus attention on the post-independence developments and modernisation of Indian Railways including self-sufficiency; export promotion and development plans for the future.

5.4.1.2 Outdoor Gallery/Open Yard

The open yard of the museum is utilised to display the heavy real size exhibits. There are as many as 79 exhibits consisting of vintage steam, diesel and electric locomotives, coaching and goods stock etc. There are as many as six gauges and the lines of various gauges are connected with multi-gauge lines to facilitate the movement. The open yard, housing some of the exquisite specimens of railway engines and coaches, has been so aesthetically planned as to synchronise with the surrounding landscape. A good care has been taken to provide proper path-ways to ensure the easy movement of the visitors and their access to every specimen present in the museum. Some important specimens, which are at display at the museum, are presented in Appendix III.

5.4.2 Regional Rail Museum, Mysore

The Mysore Rail Museum was the first regional rail museum to be set up in India, in January 1980. The display items at the museum are arranged both in open as well as in indoor galleries. A brief description is as follows:
5.4.2.1 Chamundi Gallery

This indoor circular gallery at the museum has an interesting collection of paintings and photographs. The gallery houses a series of paintings and photographs showing the development of different aspects of erstwhile Mysore State Railway (MSR).

5.4.2.2 Sriranga Pavilion

The pavilion is very beautifully constructed and in its construction incorporates many carved wooden pillars, doors and balustrades from the old Srirangapatna Railway Station. These carved wood works are believed to have come from the wooden ‘Royal Palace of Mysore’, which was devastated in a fire accident. MSR had two famous saloons, one named as Maharaja’s (king’s) Saloon and the other as Maharani’s (queen’s) Saloon. The Maharaja’s Saloon is now preserved and displayed at National Rail Museum, New Delhi, while the Maharani’s Saloon – an eight-wheeler saloon built by M/S Hurst & Nelson of U.K. in 1899 – charms the Mysore Rail Museum. The kitchen/dining car built by Burn & Co. Ltd. at Howrah in 1940 is also displayed in the Sriranga Pavilion.

The pavilion also has various small items related to MSR on display. Some of these items include:

- Theobald’s Block Instrument,
- Telephone used by Maharaja of Mysore made in 1930,
- Mysore State Railway’s clock of 1881, made in New York, and
- Junker’s chloroform inhaler, an electric medical instrument of 1889 made in London, etc.

The exhibits in the outdoor include:

- Steam locomotive (meter gauge) built in year 1920,
- Steam locomotive (meter gauge) – tank type, built in year 1932,
- Steam locomotive (narrow gauge), ES 506 built in year 1922, and
- Narrow gauge coach, Number 45, built in year 1927, etc.

5.4.3 Regional Rail Museum, Chennai

Chennai Rail Museum, Chennai at the premises of Integral Coach Factory (ICF) was opened to the public on 30th March 2002. The Museum has broadly been divided into two sections. In one section, the pictures depicting the various stages of development of Southern Railway and ICF have been put on display in the form of photographs and flexi-charts. In the other section, various miniature models and other artifacts of interest have been put on display.

In Southern Railway Section the displayed flexi-charts depict the inauguration of Southern Railway on April 14, 1952, the running of first train on Southern Railway and other important events in its development. Various types of coaches and locomotives and their developmental stages have also been displayed through photographs and flexi-charts in this section. The mascots of the three erstwhile state railways, viz. the Nizam’s State Railway, the Mysore State Railway and the Great Maratha Railway have been put on show.

In the model section, miniature models of various coaches and locomotives have been displayed, for example the miniature models of wooden first class coach, double-decker coach and steam locomotives etc. To add to the attraction, a service register dating back to 1903 to 1935, British period wall clock and gang bell, and the sickle used for clearing the weeds have been placed on the gamut of objects d’art. The models of ‘boy-wagon’ are also placed on exhibit.
Since a visit to a rail museum would never be complete without a nostalgic train ride, the museum has installed a running model of the Nilgiri Mountain Railway to give visitors a thrill of hushing steam railway. The museum in cooperation with ICF is planning to install some more real-life exhibits, like vintage coaches and other steam/electric locomotives. It has also planned to install a restaurant-on-wheels on its premises, which would be of the size and shape of a real coach with dining facilities inside. The coach will have all the modern facilities with an aesthetic taste of the past.

5.4.4 Regional Rail Museum, Vadodra

Regional rail museum at Vadodra in Gujarat, managed by Western Railway offers a vast array of artifacts, which have served their purpose with elegance in the running of the great national enterprise that is the Indian Railways.

The two saloons of erstwhile Gaekwar Baroda State Railway (GBSR), built as a fancy of maharajas of Gaekwar by BB & CI Railway workshop at Parel for the exclusive use of the royal family, have been preserved and restored to their pristine beauty at this museum. One of the saloons called Maharaja’s Saloon (RA-6), with its luxurious teakwood interior, Belgian mirrors and wide plate glass windows, even has a quaint husk cooler running on ice. The other saloon (RA-7) has a spacious observation room with panoramic lookout panels.

A train known as ‘Nostalgia Express’ is run on the premises to take the visitors on a trip into the past. The train composed of Maharaja’s Saloon and other period stock is hauled by a 1952 vintage, 2-6-2 ZB class locomotive, Number 66.
5.4.5 Regional Narrow Gauge Rail Museum, Nagpur

The regional narrow gauge rail museum at Nagpur in Maharastra is spread over a beautifully landscaped area of about four acres. The museum surrounds a tastefully refurbished 100-year-old steam locomotive shed, now having various thematic galleries and an open area to simulate a railway yard. The museum with its wide range of rare and valuable exhibits promises to take the visitors on an exciting journey into the narrow gauge past.

One of the highlights of the museum is the working ‘Bagnall’ steam locomotive built in 1916. A narrow gauge saloon, more than 100 years old, belonging to erstwhile royalty and a steam crane built in Italy are put on display at the museum. Different light fittings used in erstwhile maharajas’ saloons are also displayed. One of the galleries exhibits old railway records, uniforms worn by different railway staff and scenic photographs of different narrow gauge railways running through hills and valleys etc. The museum has a toy train, which takes the visitors on a ride, and a cafeteria where the visitors relax after a thrilling toy-train ride. There is a special philately section, which displays as many as 800 postage stamps issued worldwide on railway themes.

5.5 Steam Heritage – A Tourist Product

No doubt steam was good only as long as it was considered cheaper to run steam locomotives in comparison to other forms of motive power. But the steam on Indian Railways will always have a strong hold in the tourism sector for the reason that it evokes nostalgia for rail-travel of a bygone era. The role played by steam locomotives in the history of rail transportation, coming of age by late 19th century, cannot be ignored. The solid foundations of today’s modern high technology railway systems were actually laid by steam
locomotives, which reigned supreme not only on the railway in India, but all over the world for more than a century.

In India the manufacturing of steam locomotives was stopped in 1972 and the last normal working steam shed at Warkaner was closed down in 2000. Indian Railways had 8,120 steam locomotives in 1950-51, which increased to 19,312 in 1960-61. The 1960s onwards saw a drastic decrease in the number of steam locomotives. The number decreased to 2,915 in 1990-91 and reached to a mere 53 in 2001-02. This was due to increased dieselisation and electrification of tracks. Though the dieselisation and then electrification was desirable to increase the efficiency and speed of the railway, the negligence in saving the steam heritage is equally not welcome, more so when it comes to promote rail-based tourism in the country.

The DHR and NMR, which are still worked by steam locomotives, attract both domestic and foreign tourists by thousands. The resurrection of 'Fairy Queen' in 1996-97 opened many eyes showing the way, followed by many others soon after. The lead was taken by NFR in 2001 by introducing 'Bharamputra by Steam' between Gawahati and Pandu, which is a specially designed tourist train evoking nostalgia of steam era. The train is hauled by meter gauge American War Department Steam Locomotive (MAWD 1798) of 1944 vintage. Encouraged by an over-whelming response by the tourists NFR has taken upon to restore a GX class meter gauge 'Garratt' locomotive to working order. This is the only surviving meter gauge Garratt locomotive in working order in India, and once set on tracks it will be the only one of its kind in the world running on tracks.

The 'Jatinga Steam Safari' is yet another rail tourism promotional venture on steam by NFR. This steam safari ride takes the tourists on a
2 night/3 day trip through the exotic and most spectacular mountain lines of Barail and Jatinga Hills on Indian Railways. The construction of this line started in 1899 from the Silchar end and was completed in 1903. The line was a part of the erstwhile Assam Bengal Railway (ABR) and was linked to Port of Chittagong (now in Bangladesh). The line with 37 tunnels and 565 bridges, the most famous being the Dayang viaduct of 1899 vintage, traverses through thick bamboo jungles on a tricky hilly-terrain. More recently KSR, which has seen a plethora of technological changes with steam, petrol and diesel powering its trains, restored an original steam locomotive for heritage tourism trips and excursions in November, 2003.\textsuperscript{15}

In brief, Indian Railways does not only fulfill the need of transporting tourists from one place to another but also has a vast tourism potential in being a tourist destination in itself. It has to its credit many hill railways, which have long been attractions for tourists. The heritage of Indian Railways, in the form of its steam locomotives, unique constructions and other rolling stock both on tracks as well as preserved at railway museums, has an immense nostalgic appeal for the tourists. The luxury trains running on Indian tracks in different parts of the country, provide tourists an experience of bygone era.

Indian Railways, thus, has an immense variety of tourism products in place on and off its tracks. But the lack of concerted efforts by railway to market these products in both domestic as well as international tourism circles has led to non/under-utilisation of these products. However, planned development and proper exploitation of these assets could be extremely rewarding.
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