ABSTRACT

In the present study entitled "Role of India Tourism Development Corporation in the Promotion of Tourism in India", the author has examined the various phases of Indian tourism especially during British and Post-independence period. Indian civilization is largely a history of human values and the origin of tourist centres have been studied in four phases of historical development:

(1) The Ancient period (from the advent of Aryans to A.D. 11th century),
(2) The Medieval Period,
(3) The British period, and
(4) The Post-Independence period.

The 'Ancient period' was marked with religious and cultural renaissances, witnessing an unprecedented growth of religious centres, particularly Hindu, Buddhist and Jain: temples, monasteries and Buddhist - Sculptures dressed up Indian landscape. When the Aryans first came to India at 1500 B.C., they found a highly developed urban civilization in country which was much superior to their own. The cities were well-planned, with wide roads, sanitary drainage, baths
and granaries, while the houses were built of bricks. Out of the intermingling of the Aryan and the pre-Aryan cultures of India developed the great Hindu religion. On the material side, India had trade relations with far-off countries, such as Babylonia. Later on its market for raw materials and industrial products extended as far as Egypt and the Roman Empire in the west and China in the east. Its culture spread to many lands, such as, central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia, Ceylon, Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and China. The second phase of development mostly relates to Mughal kings when Islam came to India through Arab traders in the eighth century. The Muslim kings, in particular the Mughals, enriched India's cultural heritage due to their building activity in and around Agra - an archaeological museum of Mughal architecture. Of them, Akbar and Shahjahan were prolific builders; the former expressed himself in red stone (Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri Complex) and the latter sponsored an 'age of marble'. The Taj - a unique synthesis of Hindu Muslim art, is the great achievement of this period. While the Mughal expressed themselves in stone and marble, the Nawabs of Oudh could get a fair success in mortar: a few specimens of their architectural styles can be seen in religious and secular buildings of Lucknow. The third phase was enlightened by establishment of summer-resorts of the isolated Kumaon region, giving birth to pleasure-tourism. The fourth phase stamped secular tourism with
'Commercial hospitality' and promotion of tourism became State's responsibility, initiating action in various tourist services, viz., accommodation, transport and entertainment. Besides, new growth centres in the form of multi-purpose projects sprang up like (i) religious centres, (ii) Scenic centres, (iii) historical and archaeological centres, and (iv) Unurbanised centres: University town and growth-resorts. These growth centres have developed "tourist image".

Seen in this perspective India, with its ancient rich cultural heritage and natural beauty spots is in a unique position to offer maximum fare to tourists from abroad. But the facts are otherwise. While world tourism has expended so fast in the past four decades, from a few lakhs only during the forties of the current century to as many as 350 million by the year 1985, India could graduated from 16.829 in 1951 to just over 8 lakh. The current statistics reveals that every major port of departure shows a steady and sometimes dramatic rise in outbound traffic. The total number of travellers from Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta were 8,64,059 in 1979 and this had risen to 12,98,626 by 1983, the latest year for which statistics are available. In addition, another 2,97,294 left from various other ports. All these 15,95,920 souls, according to the Reserve Bank of India which issued them foreign exchange permits. The total volume of business in tourism was US $ 99 billion in 1983. We got $ 5800 million, less than a glorious 1 %. This is so
because we have delayed encouraging tourism to a criminal degree.

To day, the rise in the standard of living of the people in several developed and developing countries along with fast technological revolution in transportation industry has brought overseas holiday within the reach of the middle and even working class. The civilisation of the more affluent countries today has rightly been described as "the leisure time civilization". In some developed countries working hours have been reduced to 40 a week and I foresee a distinct possibility to justify Jean Faurastic's optimistic view that by 1995, a 30 hours week may become a reality. This is both a challenge and opportunity for national tourist organisations, tour operators and international carriers to tap a market which has no limit.

India is far behind its fair share of world tourism. This is so because the Government has not accorded tourism the status of an export-oriental industry. Besides, visitors to India spend on an average 27 days in our country - an average which is the second highest in the world. The visitors spent about 250 million dollars in 1979, making tourism the sixth largest "export" of India. But almost 85 % of the world tourism receipts are taken away by European (60 %) and American countries (25 %) leaving only a small share (15 %) to be distributed among so many developing nations
of Asia and Africa, causing keen competition. I have, therefore, suggested point to point tourism, more resorts, an improvement in infrastructure among others. Accordingly ITDC has opened an office in Kuwait to cover Arab countries and soon another office is being added in Tehran to promote tourism to India from Iran. Similarly India Tourism Development Corporation is expending its activities in Australasia and East Africa by adding small one-man offices in Osaka and Melbourne, in addition to our existing offices in Tokyo and Sydney. Similar office are being opened in Thailand and Malaysia from where India is getting increasing number of visitors. Hence urgent steps must be taken by the Government through its tourist offices while tiding up the internal infrastructure like adequate hotel accommodation, comfortable transport and well informed tourist guides to undertake package tourism within the country.

In view of the rapid expansion of Indian Tourism in the near future, the India Tourism Development Corporation has launched a region-wise campaign for the renovation and modernisation of the existing hotels, restaurants, motels and lodges as well as opening of new ones under the Annual Plans (1985-90). The author has made region-wise study of the hotel accommodation in Northern India, South India, Eastern India and Western India and has drawn suitable conclusions that tourist investment has been paying rich dividends. In some regions it has paved the way in enlarging
our national economy. One has reasons to believe that tourism is a highly developed economic activity, besides it being intensively employment oriented. Also it brings about distribution of wealth as there is movement of wealth from developed areas leading to balanced economy in the country. It is also a great nation builder. It brings the people of diverse background together and creates a feeling of oneness among its people. It provides jobs to the unemployed and restless youth of the country in the various segments of the industry, such as travel, hotel keeping, airlines, handicrafts and many other allied jobs which generate from this particular activity.

Presently, tourism has come to be recognised as one of the world's largest profit-oriented industry. It is a 37 billion dollar industry involving movement of over 220 million people a year world-wide and as such international tourism has emerged as the most outstanding phenomenon of the 20th century. Its potential of earning foreign exchange is so great the several big and small countries frame their annual budgets on the basis of revenues earned from foreign visitors. The small Himalayan kingdom of Nepal derives almost entire revenue from tourism and mountaineering expeditions while Thailand attract about 4 million tourists from abroad each year. In Alaska, a lonely bleak and barren rock jutting out towards the sea from a height of 100 metres, is visited by as many as 2.5 lakh tourists from Europe and
US annually. Tourism has a multiplier effect double that of other industries and does not deplete resources or pollute the environment. With less than 0.2% of the Sixth Plan invested in it, tourism earned Rs. 5000 crores or 10% of the foreign exchange earnings for that period for India. Thus this modern industry, still to be recognised as such by the Central and State Governments, has proved the second largest foreign exchange earner for the country with Rs. 1300 worth crore foreign exchange earned during 1985, next only to Engineering Goods industry earning Rs. 1800 crore.

If handled properly, tourism has a great role to play in India's economic development as it generates more employment and also contributes to the Government revenue. Hence in the context of Indian economy it has been acknowledged that tourism as an industry assumes special importance in view of its potential of earning foreign exchange for the country. The target of 2.5 million tourist arrivals by the year 1990 as envisaged in the Seventh Five Year Plan, if achieved, would result in a foreign exchange earning worth at least Rs. 1500 crores. Similarly a working group set up in June, 1985 submitted a report and a target of 2.9 million tourists and earnings of Rs. 15,000 crores in foreign exchange has been set up. How far short of this target we will fall remains to be seen. But if the above targets come true it would help in reducing the trade deficit by contributing
heavily to balance of payments, correcting regional imbalances dispersing the socio-economic benefits of tourism and creating employment avenues. In addition, the India Tourism Development Corporation should encourage the production of short film documentaries like "Festival of India" held in U.K., U.S.A. and France. These documentaries are to be shown in other countries having a tourist potential. This will also help in attracting tourists from abroad in large number than before. Needless to say that India with hundreds of attractions ranging from the snow-clad mountains of the north and north east to beautiful sea beaches on its west and south coast, richest ancient cultural heritage depicted in the temples of the South and the central parts of the country, palaces, forts and monuments spread in all states and Union territories, has much to offer a foreign visitor in his pursuit of knowledge.

Hence, in all stages of tourism development, the strong economic base is the backbone of tourist industry which needs strengthening of a country's economic infrastructure with due regard to accommodation, transport and communication, the supply of water, electric power, the provision of health, education and public services. To implement this gigantic task one should not hesitate in attracting Private Sector investment in building up tourist infrastructure. The possible benefits of collaboration between the group of the South Asian Countries should also be considered in the development of tourism.
While analysing the impact of tourist industry on national economy, the author observes that tourist investment has stabilised our financial position, removed backwardness and eradicated poverty to a very great extent from certain regions of the country. The questions posed below and their answers are very revealing. For instance (i) Does a unit of capital invested in tourism create more or less employment and income, and earn more or less revenue, than it would if it were invested elsewhere in the economy? (ii) What is the foreign exchange cost of obtaining the export earnings, and how does it compare with the cost in other export industries? Measuring the output resulting from tourism one finds that the smaller the important contents of tourist expenditure, the greater are not only the net receipts of foreign exchange but also the creation of income (gross domestic or national product at market prices) resulting directly from the tourist expenditure. Similarly it is also found that Government Revenue from international tourism has been gradually increasing. Where tourism bulks large in the formation of the domestic product it tends also to contribute high share of total tax revenue in which case the tourist sector is apt to be one of the principal source of development financing. Hence to ensure financial stability, the India Tourism Development Corporation took a number of measures like restructuring and strengthening of the divisions set up, aggressive marketing, product improvement and cost
control. It resulted in the steady increase in the turnover from Rs. 1312.02 lakh in 1974-75 to Rs. 5094.57 lakh in 1983-84. Similarly the estimated foreign exchange earnings had been showing a rising trend right from 1974-75 to 1983-84. It was Rs.600.00 and Rs.700.00 lakhs in 1974-75 and 1975-76, which rose to Rs.1700.00 and Rs.1800.00 lakh in 1982-83 and 1983-84 respectively.

Further, it has been observed that travel agencies are the main constituent and vital segments of tourism promotion. The objectives of the Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) are to safeguard the travelling public from exploitation by unscrupulous and unreliable tour operators. The TAAI maintains close contact with world bodies and represents matters affecting the travel and tourism industry of the country at various international forums. It holds its annual conventions in the country and in the neighbouring countries where the representatives of all the segments of the travel and tourism industry gather and provide a forum to discuss problems of the industry and find out ways and means of developing the industry and increase the flow of domestic and international tourists, both inbound and outbound.

In its eventful 35 years, the association has rendered valuable service not only its members but also to the travel and tourism industry and the country. It promotes tourist traffic in the country to earn valuable foreign exchange
through the activities of its members. TAAI's representatives are often invited to join delegations to foreign countries, to explore market potentialities of different countries. The Annual Tourism Awards by the department of tourism to travel agents earning maximum foreign exchange at the time of TAAI conventions is a testimony to the fact that the government recognises the useful role played by travel agencies. Here the author invites the attention of the government that a new scheme called the Assistance for the Development of International Tourism be enforced under which financial support to recognised tour operators and travel agents be provided on specific items like publicity abroad, research and study of tourist markets and participation in exhibitions promoting international tourism.

Further the problems like issue of temporary visas, cutting the time of clearance at the airports, doing away with harsh luggage rules and checkings, provision of satisfactory taxi service at reasonable rates from airport to the hotel and also for local travel, shopping and sight seeing etc. and adequate hotel and accommodation must be provided in the country. It is, therefore, suggested to set up a Facilitation Committee to frame rules and regulations in order to do away with travel inconveniences. What is most needed is to accord warm welcome and to get warmth hospitality from our people wherever the tourists travel
in this vast sub-continent of India. Give to a visitor or a guest the same respect as you would give to your parents and teachers.

It is, however, very depressing to learn that in India market researches in tourism have not been taken up. It is suggested that every region of India must have a well equipped "Tourism Research Cell" which prepares inventory of Tourist attractions, makes exhaustive enquiries into the holiday habits, takes up surveys of market prospects and develops a tourist profile of the region. Today Hawaii and California tourism industries are thriving on their home market. Most of the industries have come up with a well-planned tourist education and tourism as a subject has been introduced on the Diploma and Degree courses of the Universities; post graduate and research facilities are also provided by a few countries. Tourism (Italy) has an 'International Centre for Advanced Tourist Researches' (CIEST). Tourist education is a state responsibility in Greece and the Government has established a tourist school (S.T.E.), whose operations are defined by law. Spanish Institute of Tourist Studies grants fellowship to deserving candidates.

It is suggested that a tourist centre be housed in a good university where, besides the facilities of advanced research work, a Diploma course on tourism may be taken pp initially.

To sum up, the share of developing countries in international tourism is very small. Hardly 7% of the total
international traffic touches the countries of Africa, Asia and Australasia 93% of international tourism of a total of 220 million visitors is confined to Europe and North America. Two thirds of the total tourist traffic in the world is limited to Europe. The question before tourism experts from Asia and the Pacific is how to increase our share of the total market by offering reasonable and attractive holiday packages.

The second question is the need for a rational blend of the demand for tourist facilities of very high standard for visitors from affluent countries and the requirements of the domestic travellers or the visitors from not so affluent countries. The latter has unfortunately so far not received the attention it deserves. This is a problem which we are facing particularly in India today. While, on the one hand, we have built luxury hotels to fulfil the requirements of affluent tourists with the scarce resources provided by the Government, on the other hand, we have not been able to pay adequate attention to the needs of the domestic tourist and the tourist from countries which are not affluent. Do we create two separate sets of facilities or do we bring about a synthesis of two demands for our tourist product? An answer to this question should be of relevance not only to India but also to several of the countries which are members of the two Commissions of WTO. I would like to add that tourism has to compete for resources with other pressing requirements of
any developing nation i.e. food, clothing, shelter, fertilisers, industry etc.

Thirdly, tourism, to our way of thinking, is not only an economic activity of importance to national development but also an important medium of cultural exchange among nations of the world. A lot of emphasis has been laid - in fact, if I may say so over emphasis on the economic role of tourism, its contribution to the foreign exchange earnings of the nation and its potential for greater employment. It is high time for us to understand the important role of tourism as a means of social education and social mobilization in the country itself, as a cementing force for fostering better understanding among nations of the world for developing closer cultural and business relations and as a significant factor in world peace.

Finally, in order to have a new look at our tourism policy, especially in the context of the requirements of the less affluent sections of our society, a Committee of Experts is proposed to be set up by the Government of India in the near future. The Committee should be able to advise the Government regarding the directions in which our tourism should progress - both international and domestic, the latter especially to meet the needs of the common man. Further the Committee should also keep in mind that a highly developed infrastructure is a sine-qua-non for the promotion of tourist industry. Hence the country's overall tourism policy should
be based on selected targets which are realistically attainable and may produce maximum cultural, social and economic benefits for all time to come.