

A Study of the Growth of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

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Abstract: *Economic development of any country depends greatly on the growth and development of its trade, commerce and industry. Andaman and Nicobar Islands are located in the Bay of Bengal. These islands were once coined as KALAPANI (the Black water) indicating the dreaded transportation, punishment of the British Government of India. A & N Island is rich in resources for tourism, which are found in abundance. The natural beauty of the A & N Islands is very attractive. Both the domestic and foreign tourists consider it as the Green Paradise in the Marigold sun recognised. Tourism in Andaman & Nicobar Islands is still in infant stage. The resources responsible for the growth of tourism are yet to be exploited fully. However presently the tourism is growing in a zigzag manner, both positive as well as negative, and increasing and decreasing. The tourism industry in these islands can be developed in a very big way. So the growth of the tourism industry in these islands both in terms of number of domestic tourists, foreign tourists and the total revenue earned by this administration have been found out and analysed, interpreted and submitted. Problems of the tourism in these islands and suitable measures are also suggested.*

Introduction

Economic development of any country depends greatly on the growth and development of its trade, commerce and industry. Trade and Commerce remove the hindrances of person, time, exchange and knowledge in connection with the distribution of goods till they reach the consumers and by doing so, it ensures a free and smooth flow of goods and services from producers to consumers. Industrial growth, in majority of cases, is the most potent dynamic factor in the process of accelerated economic development. Industry also plays an important role in the development of backward areas and in removing disparity. Tourism Education is a branch of Business/Commerce Education occupying the status of an Industry. Now Tourism is considered as a part of commerce. Further, trade, commerce and industry including Tourism offer ever-widening employment opportunities. Tourism Industry is one of the best types of Business of our country. So a study has been undertaken to trace the growth, to find out the Problems and to offer suitable suggestions for the tourism management in the A & N Islands.

Tourism

Industry plays as an important role in the economy of any country. Growth of industrial sector is the parameter to measure the economic development in a country particularly developing country like that of India. Tourism is now rightly added to the long list of established industries. The tourism industry started to contribute to the regional development of the trade, commerce, manufacturing sectors, tax revenue to the government and the national income of the country as a

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whole. The employment opportunities tend to increase. It is mainly being a labour intensive industry, providing employment to the semi-skilled and the unskilled labourers. Besides generating income and employment opportunities, the development in tourism gives a strong social relationships both nationally and internationally and thereby it plays a positive role in the field of both Inter-state and international relationships.

Tourism brings and joins the people of different cultures, religions, languages, etc. Today the economic, political, social and cultural environment of the world has become so complicated. Though understanding among the people, the exchange of their views and thoughts on economic, political and socio-cultural issues are absolutely essential in the present day situation. Peace among the people of a village, town, city, district, state and country and countries and the world as a "whole" should be manufactured, produced and fabricated. This is possible only by the smokeless industry" Tourism". Even for tangible products, the Nations, no doubt, depend on each other by extending their help to others within the meaning of the Principle of Comparative Advantage.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands (A & N Islands)

Andaman and Nicobar Islands are located in the Bay of Bengal. It is popularly called as "The Bay Islands", constitute the remotest region of our country. These islands were once coined as KALAPANI (the Black water) indicating the dreaded transportation, punishment of the British Government of India. "KALAPANI" is all that many have heard of a term that for centuries conjured up the dark vision of forbidden land surrounded by vast sheets of deep water, unapproachable and hostile. The inhabitants of these islands are scattered far-flung and wide over the islands. But due to the location of the small villages, inhabitants are cut-off from civilisation and from the source of supply of essential commodities. The towns and small villages have started flourishing only recently, because of the harbour facilities that have been provided in these islands and slow progress of shipping and other transport facilities.

A Green Paradise (Rajavel: 1998)

A & N Island is rich in resources for tourism, which are found in abundance. The natural beauty of the A & N Islands is very attractive. Both the domestic and foreign tourists consider it as the Green Paradise in the Marigold sun recognised. The scenic beauty emerges like a beautiful green oasis in the Bay of Bengal. A most hospitable and cosmopolitan society, free from rigidity of caste, creed and religion, projecting Indian culture, unity in diversity is the A & N islands, today. The green vegetation, the tropical forests, the sun-kissed sandy beaches, serpentine creeks, backwaters etc altogether make the islands most serene and enchanting. The industrial development in A & N islands has not been fast enough. The industrial sector gives little scope for generation of employment and income opportunities. Hence the tourism industry along with the other allied activities like trade and commerce need attention of the A & N Administration, Planners, Policy Makers, Hoteliers, Economists, Researchers, Academicians, Tour operators, to find out ways and means to improve the tourism facilities.

Tourism Season

The weather condition of A&N islands is having its own peculiar nature. Geographically, the weather conditions may be classified as winter, summer, rainy etc.. Normally, every year these islands have heavy rainfall during the period from May to mid of September and slight rainfall from mid of November to first week of December. This is due to two monsoons namely South

A Study of the Growth of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

West and North East. So the best season for tourists to visit these islands (almost all the islands) is from October to May. The remaining period from May to September is also not a bad time to visit these islands. But generally tourists come less in number to these islands during this period. So the period between October and May is called as Tourist Season and the period between May and September is called as Off-Season.

Factors Favouring Growth

Tourism industry in these Bay Islands is a healthy infant industry from the point of view of tourists, their time available, amount of income and free mobility decide the destination. The people will travel on large scale if their time, income, mobility are at their discretion. A survey proves that the people having discretionary income give preference to tourism and travel rather purchasing consumer durables or making long term investment. The main factors favouring the growth of tourism in A & N islands, besides the above, are:

1. Never ending Natural Scenic Beauty of this Green Paradise.
2. Pollution free natural way of valuable life, free from gundaim, riots, burglary and political evils and politics-free life.
3. A most hospitable and cosmopolitan society, free from the rigidities of caste, creed and religion, projecting Indian culture and unity in diversity in A & N islands.
4. Increased transport facilities, not only between Mainland-Island but also between islands.
5. Increased accommodation facilities for different class of people.
6. Selective publicity through the educational publishers like Manas Publishers who are showing keen interest in the development of these Mari Gold Islands.

Growth of Tourism

Tourism in Andaman & Nicobar Islands is still in infant stage. The resources responsible for the growth of tourism are yet to be exploited fully. However presently the tourism is growing in a zigzag manner, both positive as well as negative, and increasing and decreasing. To elicit the real growth of tourism, the contribution of tourism in terms of total revenue earned by the Andaman & Nicobar administration from tourism activities has been taken as one of the scales to measure the growth of tourism. The trend in growth and development of tourism in the A&N islands is discussed under the following headings namely,

1. Domestic Tourism,
2. Foreign Tourism and
3. Total Tourism.

All the relevant required data to trace the growth of tourism was not available. Only the number of tourists arrived on these islands has been taken and analysed to the maximum possible way and presented.

Domestic Tourism

Though the Tourism Industry as a whole i.e both Domestic Tourism and Foreign Tourism and its development are very essential to this territory, domestic tourism forms an integral part of this Island Tourism. As it is already mentioned that A & N Islands is a mini India due to the amazing racial and cultural mix, people from all regions, religions are living in this territory. Hence, the place like A & N islands with different socio economic and cultural patterns, the promotion of domestic tourism would definitely increase and encourage the unity in diversity, a fundamental base and necessity for National Integration. Domestic tourism increases the possibility of peace

through understanding among the divergent sectors in the population. In fact, development of foreign tourism is possible only if the domestic tourism has a strong and fast growth. Hence an attempt has been made to trace the growth of domestic tourism in A & N islands by taking down the number of tourists arrived.

Foreign Tourism

Foreign Tourism plays an important role both directly and indirectly in promoting the International Trade in earning Foreign Exchange, settling of balance of payments position and in international understanding. Besides, foreign exchange, as it is already mentioned, the foreign tourism by its tourism multiplier effect will stimulate the employment generation, income generation, development of local growth Centres etc.,

Total Tourism

Total number Tourists arrived and Growth of Tourists Domestic, Foreign and Total Tourists have been shown in Table and through graphs respectively. It is clear from the above table that the number of tourists arrived into these islands has been increasing since 1980 onwards. The reasons for the increase and decrease in the number of tourists have already been analysed in the light of the growth of Domestic Tourism and Foreign Tourism. Growth in total number of tourists arrived into these islands has been increasing. The main reasons are frequent changes and cancellations of ship and flights.. The variation in the number of foreign tourists is also one of the reasons for the fluctuations in the growth of total tourists. Declaration of Tourism as Industry in these islands by giving all benefits such as concessions, subsidies, incentives etc, was the main favourable reason for the growth of tourism particularly domestic tourism. The tourists arrived to Andaman & Nicobar Islands are shown in the following table:-

Table: Growth of Tourism in A & N Islands Tourists & Tourism Revenue Year wise

Year	DT	% GOPY	FT	% GOPY	TT	% GOPY	TR	% GOPY
2000 – 01	78378	-	4924	-	83634	-	79.36	-
2001 – 02	88921	11.8	4833	-01.8	93754	11.1	111.38	28.7
2002 – 03	91211	02.5	4269	-13.2	95280	01.8	132.73	15.5
2003 – 04	96567	05.5	4683	08.8	111450	05.7	137.91	03.7
2004 – 05	72603	-33.0	2860	-63.7	75463	-34.2	102.35	-34.7
2005 – 06	52378	-38.6	3643	21.5	56021	-34.7	66.87	-53.0
2006 – 07	137176	57.4	13041	48.3	130217	56.9	182.45	63.3
2007 – 08	125424	01.8	10988	35.9	136412	04.5	189.04	03.5
2008 – 09	127912	01.9	13038	15.7	140950	03.2	203.63	07.2
2009 – 10	153175	16.5	12642	-03.1	165817	15.0	232.84	12.5
2010 – 11	188619	18.8	16674	24.1	205113	19.2	248.19	06.2
2011 – 12	218811	13.8	17158	02.8	235969	13.0	260.81	04.8
2012 – 13	242485	09.7	15042	-14.0	246129	08.3	227.66	-14.5
2013 - 14	244167	0.69	13146	-14.4	280310	08.1	285.69	20.3
2014-15	294415	17.0	15581	15.6	309996	9.7	NA	NA

Source: Basic Statistics & Tourism Department, Port Blair

GOPY – Growth over previous year expressed in %, FT – Foreign tourist,

DT – Domestic Tourist, TT – Total Tourist, TR – Total revenue ; NA – Not Available

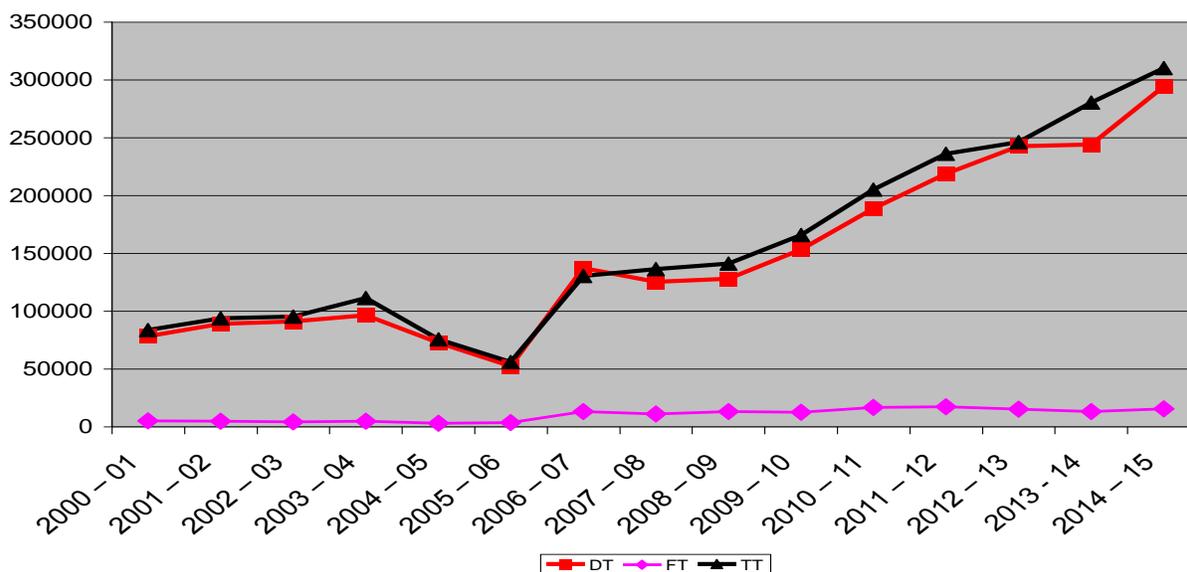
A Study of the Growth of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The above Table shows the growth of domestic tourist, foreign tourist and total tourist in terms of the number of domestic tourists and foreign tourists arrived into the islands. From the year 2000 – 01 to 2003 – 04 the number of domestic tourists increased, but in the next two years i.e. 2004 – 05 and 2005 – 06 the number of domestic tourists decreased by recording a negative growth rate of 33.0% and 38.6% respectively. The main reason due for this is the earthquake and tsunami has affected the islands in the year 2004.

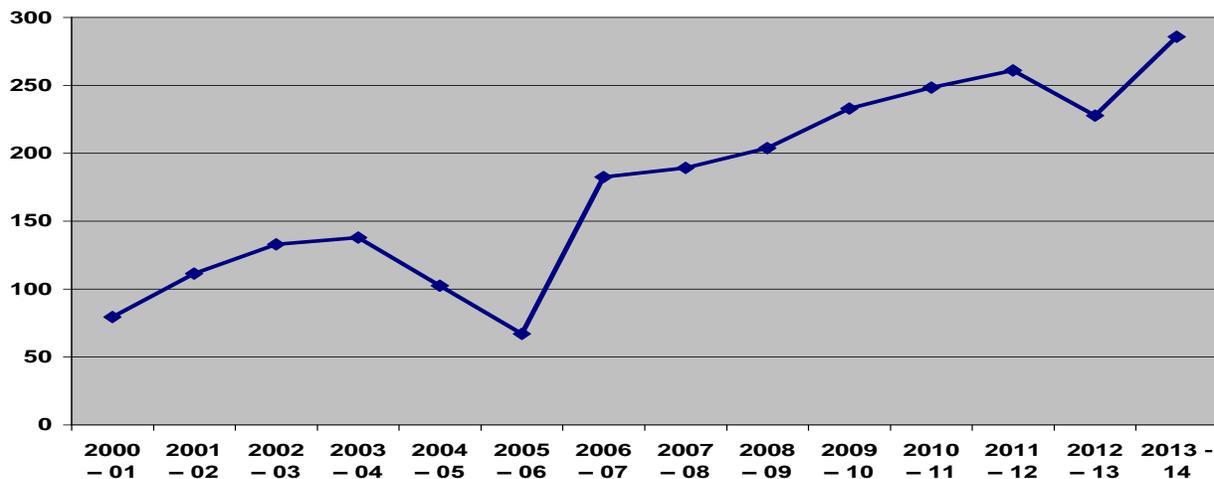
The impact of this natural calamity affected the tourism badly in these 2 years. However from 2006 – 07 onwards the domestic tourism has been growing gradually by recording a significant growth rate of 57.4% in the year 2006 – 07 over previous year 2005 – 06 .as far as the number of foreign tourist are concerned growth rate is in a zigzag form since 2000 – 01. But the impact of the tsunami has affected strongly the number of foreign tourists arrived into these islands by recording a negative growth rate of 63.25% in the year 2004 – 05 over previous year 2003 – 04.

The number of domestic tourists, foreign tourists and its growth rate has determined the growth rate of total tourists arrived into the islands. Total revenue generated by tourism is also another one of the scales of measuring tourism. The table shows the total revenue has been increasing every year gradually except 2004 – 05 and 2005 – 06. The growth trend has recorded a negative growth rate of 34.7% and 53.0% in the year 2004 – 05 and 2005 – 06 respectively. The reason for such decrease in growth of total revenue from tourism was due to the natural calamity tsunami and heavy earthquake. However from the year 2006 – 07 onwards the growth of total revenue has recorded gradual increase with the high growth rate of 63.3% in 2006 – 07. But during 2012 – 13 again the total revenue has come down to 227660 lakhs by recording a negative growth rate of 14.5% this is due to decrease in arrival of foreign tourists and decrease in growth rate of foreign tourists i.e. 14.0%.

Growth of Tourism (No. of Tourists)



Growth of Tourism (Total Revenue From Tourism Industry)



Problems

Tourism is the only scope of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for its economic development. But it is still in infant stage. With the growing population, the tourism is the only solution to remove the unemployment problem. But this sector is also not free from the Problems. However the problems are solvable with a number of solutions that can be carried out with proper management. The Tourism sector requires effective planning, and a detailed study on the available resources favourable to the tourism in this territory. Tourism problems may be classified into three types namely, Problems Facing the Tourists, Problems Facing the Tourism Entrepreneurs and Problems Facing the Management. No system is established till date to register, monitor, regulate and streamline the activities of the persons related to the tourism namely the tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers, boat operators, tourism traders or entrepreneurs etc.. Hence the units related to tourism industry are working in these islands as unregulated units without any guidance and responsibility. No Tourism Policy has been prepared for these islands till date.

Suggestions

The followings are few suggestions offered for the development of Tourism in these islands.

1. A clear-cut Tourism Policy and detailed Tourism Planning suitable for these islands are to be constructed by taking the eco-system of this territory. For this purpose, the experts from all departments by giving more weight to the persons who have done research on tourism areas and an open door seminar is to be organised at least in three rounds.
2. The present department/proposed department must immediately issue a circular to all the tourism related traders and entrepreneurs including the auto and taxi to register their names with the tourism department.
3. The road tax and the license to the commercial vehicles should not be issued without the copy of certificate of registration with the tourism department. A minimum qualification is to be fixed for the drivers who are going to engage their vehicle for the tourism purpose. The minimum qualification for the same is recommended as a Degree.

A Study of the Growth of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

4. At least once in a six months, the owners of the vehicles which are put for the tourism purposes, the drivers, the hotel owners, the tour and travel agents, boat operators, the related tourism officers etc. are to be given a orientation programme at various levels.
5. All Infrastructural facilities for the tourism development must be provided by the local government. Water, Security, Power, Cheap Transport, Welfare facilities, Guides, roads, lights on the roads, mile stones, direction stones, guest houses with reduced tariff etc. are some of the infrastructural facilities immediately needed for the development of tourism in these islands.

Conclusion

The Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has been Blessed with a lot of Resources by the Nature. These resources are yet to be economically exploited fully. Tourism is the only scope of these Islands since the other sectors do not record much growth and development due to various reasons. But the Tourism has recorded a mark able growth though it requires efficient management with the Planning, Organizing, staffing, Controlling, Communicating, Budgeting and Coordinating and with the suitable Tourism Policy. Tourism has excellent scope in these islands if it is properly managed. Once the impediments in the path of the development of Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is removed and if a Strategy, Tourism Planning, and the Tourism Policy are formulated in the light of the suggestions given above, and the same is implemented very carefully, it is strongly believed that the Tourism in Andaman and Nicobar Islands will be improved, the revenue from the Tourism will increase, the office and administrative expenses will be reduced and the surplus can be seen. The Tourism will attract more tourists in to these islands and also be able to contribute more to the economic development of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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