

Rajasthan's Tourism Industry Growing

The tourism industry accounts for about 8.6 per cent of India's national GDP. The industry is the largest in the service category and Rajasthan has not been left behind. The State of Rajasthan still holds its mettle as the preferred destination for both domestic and foreign tourists. Tourism accounts for over 15 per cent of the Rajasthan's economy and attracts over 10 per cent of the foreign tourists visiting India annually.



In 2010, the number of tourist arrivals in Rajasthan was 26.8 million. Of this number, 25.5 million were domestic tourists while foreign tourists aggregated to about 1.3 million. In fact Rajasthan registered an average annual tourist arrival growth rate of 12% in foreign and 15% in domestic tourists. These figures are an indicator of a booming and promising tourism sector in Rajasthan.

Around 60 percent of all foreign tourists that visit the state come from Europe. France takes up a huge share of the European visitors with about 167,000 visitors (16 percent). Germany follows closely with around 100,000 visitors (9 per cent). Other European countries include the United Kingdom (8%), Italy (6%) and Switzerland (4%). The United States of America represents the largest market of non-European visitors with around 82,000 visitors (8%). Other source countries for foreign tourists include Australia, Netherlands, Canada, Japan and Bangladesh.

According to the Economic Review of 2010–11 the state ranks 5th in India in the number of domestic tourist arrivals. This is a slight drop from its rank as 4th in 2009–2010. Rajasthan accounted for about 3.9 per cent of the total domestic tourists. The state was 6th in number of foreign tourist arrivals which was about 7.8 percent of total foreign tourists in the country.

The state's future in tourism seems even more promising after the inclusion of Jantar Mantar, Jaipur in the list of World Heritage Sites of UNESCO. In addition, most ancient and neglected forts and palaces have been rehabilitated to offer top notch accommodation.



Rajasthan has a developed tourism infrastructure, with over 6,000 rooms spread over more than 150 hotels. Of these, over 1,400 rooms (54 hotels) belong to the heritage category. The 'Palace on Wheels', a famous attraction for international tourists is found in Rajasthan.

Rajasthan is easily accessible to other states in India through air and rail. According to a tourist survey conducted in 2011, the average foreign visitor stays for about 28.7 days in India and around 2.8 days in Jaipur. The average expenditure of them is \$207.



Rajasthan continues to face challenges that impede its growth as a tourist destination. The state needs to improve on the sanitation of its public spaces and the ease of travel around the state so as to add to its international appeal. The state should also consider providing more online payment and reservation services as more tourists are resorting to using the internet to plan and book their holidays in India. Foreign tourists occasionally complain of being hassled. This can be tackled by ensuring improved enforcement by the concerned authorities.

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