

Tourism Development In Jaisalmer

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ABSTRACT

The Department of Tourism is giving an attractive invitation to Indian as well as foreign tourists with the most gracious words in Rajasthani language – ‘Padharo Mhare Desh’, meaning thereby that you are most welcome to our part of the country, please do visit our land. Rajasthan has been regarded as an extremely delightful region of India by the historians. James Todd has written in his “Travels in Western India” that whatever he was during his tours of the different parts of Rajasthan was really very colorful and extremely attractive in several ways. There is immense potential for the development of tourism in colorful Rajasthan (Rang-Rangilo Rajasthan). The important cities of Rajasthan such as Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Ajmer, Bikaner etc. are known for their historical monuments, art and culture.

1. Tourism Circuits

Rajasthan has been divided into the following nine circuits from the tourism point of view –

- 1) Dundhar Circuit – Jaipur-Samode-Ramgarh-Dausa-Abhaneri.
- 2) Brij Mewat Circuit – Alwar-Sariska-Deeg-Bharatpur-Karauli- Ranthambhor.
- 3) Hadoti Circuit – Bundi-Kota-Jhalawar-Baran.
- 4) Mewar Circuit – Udaipur, Kumbhalgarh, Nathdwara-Chittorgarh.
- 5) Vaged Circuits – Dungarpur-Banswara.
- 6) Godwar Circuit – Mount Abu-Ranakpur-Jalore.
- 7) Desert Circuit – Jodhpur-Barmer-Jaisalmer-Bikaner.
- 8) Merwara-Marwar Circuit – Ajmer-Pushkar-Merta-Nagaur.
- 9) Shekawati Circuit – Sikar-Nawalgarh-Dundlod-Mandawa.

These nine circuits possess their own beauty and attractions for the tourists in Rajasthan.

2. Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation Ltd. (RTDC)

It was established in 1978 as a Private Limited Company. Their main functions are as follows-

- (i) Establishment, development and implementation of projects and scheme for the development of tourism in the state.
- (ii) Construction and running of tourist bungalows, restaurants, cafeteria, motels, youth hostels etc. for providing loading and boarding facilities to the tourists.
- (iii) To organize package tours and render facilities for transport, entertainment, shopping etc.
- (iv) To acquire, maintain and develop places of tourist-interest.
- (v) To provide distribute and sell publicity material for tourism in Rajasthan.

A new mid-way has been started at Dholpur by RTDC which is its 42nd unit. Tourism facilities are being increased in every district. Out of 20 heritage hotels in the country, 15 hotels are being run in Rajasthan alone which can be increased in

future. A video-cassette ‘Desert Triangle’ has been prepared, which depicts the tourist-places and culture of Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Dungarpur, Banswara and Bhilwara.

3. New Programmes

- (1) The Government had adopted the policy of encouraging private investors in tourism which was declared as an industry in March 1989. Capital subsidy has been allowed in the range of 15 to 20% and a provision of Rs. 1.50 crore (for subsidy) was made for the purpose for 1994-95. For the safety and development of forts, palaces and other historical monuments a provision of Rs. Crore was made.
- (2) Paying Guest Scheme has been started in nine tours of Rajasthan, such as Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Ajmer, Chittorgarh, Mount Abu and Pushkar, where more than 4 thousands persons can stay as paying guests with 562 families.
- (3) Sewerage system for the protection of world-famous Jaisalmer fort has been started.
- (4) Mid-way facilities are being developed for the tourists at Dechu, Salasar, Deoli, Pindwara, and Beawar and programmes were launched in this connection during 1994-95 in these places.
- (5) The state government is already working on a major area scheme for the all-round development of ‘Darga Sharif’, Ajmer and ‘Thirathraj’ Pushkar. In the same order, in 1994-95, Keladevi, Gogamedi, Salasarji, Ramdeora, Deshnok, Mehandipur Balaji and Nagaur darga are being developed in a planned manner.
- (6) Air-service is being developed for the facility of tourists. The weekly air-flights have been increased from 9 to 42. The state government is planning to develop tourism by making tourist-circuit for air-taxies. Air-trips available in the state would be used for the purpose.
- (7) Light and Sound show would be started at Motimagri in Udaipur and at Amer Palaces.
- (8) The number of heritage hotels has reached a level of 65 at present and in 1995-96 it is estimated that it will cross 100 marks, which would be a great success in the development of such hotels in Rajasthan.

(9) The Government is preparing a comprehensive policy for tourism-development in which various issues are being considered. The new policy envisages a greater role for the private sector and the gradual withdrawal of the tourism department from areas such as infrastructure-development. The new policy envisages the formation of joint ventures for the development of properties which are not being put to use at present. These properties will be offered to private investors and joint venture companies will be formed in collaboration with the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation (RTDC). Such properties owned by the Rajasthan Government in other states will also be converted into accommodation for tourists on the basis of collaboration between the concerned department, RTDC and private groups. Japan is likely to assist in the development of the project-desert triangle.

There is a massive plan of Rs. 1700 crore for the development of tourism in Rajasthan. Out of which Rs. 600 crore would be spent by the State Government on infrastructure service. Such as power distribution and sanitation. Another Rs. 600 crore has been earmarked for developing 500 hotel-rooms every year. This amount also be utilized for setting up water works, amusement parks and craft-villages. The state government and private sector would jointly spend Rs. 500 crore for developing way-side facilities on the highway. Heritage hotels will also be developed as a part of this plan.

Thus, the state is trying to develop tourism in all possible ways.

4. International Fair 'Investour-1995'

From December 1 to 4, 1995, Rajasthan hosted an international fair at Jaipur in Birla Planetarium in which tycoons from all over the world discussed various issues related with tourism and plan investment in various sectors such as airports, five-star hotels, airbuses, etc. Some industrialists showed interest in developing private airport at Jaipur and some wanted to take airports of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur on contract. Some wanted to start tourism-rail. Thus, there is entirely a new focus on tourism development in Rajasthan. This fair was organized in Birla Planetarium under the auspices of the confederation of Indian Industries (CII). Various individuals and organizations participated in it from America, Singapore, Israel, England Italy, Switzerland, etc. in this fair; Rajasthan was the 'host-state', Kerala the 'guest-state' and Singapore the 'partner-country'. There were various seminars in this fair. Rajasthan got a new dimension for its tourism-development on the basis of this grand gala and get-together.

In the beginning of 1998, there was a conference of members of 'Prashanta Asia Travel Association' (PATA) at Jaipur in which the problem and prospects of Tourism Development in Rajasthan were discussed in details. The first phase of extending the air-strip at Jaipur to make it an international airport has commenced. An Air-strip is being constructed to facilitate tourism for destinations like Ajmer and Pushkar. Hotel-Management-Institute will be started at Jodhpur, and a Food-Craft-Institute is being developed at Udaipur. 'Rural Tourism' plan is also on the anvil. In the 1997-

98 state-budget funds were allotted for the development of Mount Abu, for drainage facilities at the site of Sursagar in Bikaner and the development of Taragarh area. The Capital-investment subsidy scheme and the Diesel-Generating-Set purchase subsidy scheme were extended for two more years. A provision of Rs. 23 crore 3 lakhs has been made in the budget for 1999-2000 for the tourism development in Rajasthan. There is a provision in it for the development of Osian temple as Jodhpur. There would be expenditure for the developments as Nathdwara, Pushkar, Salasar and Viratnagar (Rs. 20 lakh at each place). The government is committed to project and develop the historical monuments in Rajasthan. The aforesaid discussion shows that the state government is seen to develop tourism in Rajasthan so that its economy may get a face-lift and employment, income and export-earnings may get a big boost. The state should get ready to handle the inflow of one crore tourists by the turn of this century. A comprehensive and well-focused tourism-plan and tourism-policy are the need of the hour for the state.

Jaisalmer is a magnificent district of historical importance and occupies a unique place in the world of its grand history, literature, folklore, music, art and architecture. Its very old fort Jain and Hindu temples, havelis, water tank, gardens and cenotaphs catch the eyes and captivate the soul. In the words of R. Natarajan – "The sacred and the celestial, the lofty and the sublime, love, devotion, compassion – the temples of Jaisalmer, is a treasure, trove of temple, art and architecture too".

The Golden City on the threshold of the Thar Desert is Jaisalmer. Named after its founder Bhatti Rajput Rao Jaisal, of the Yadu Vamsi clan who founded the city in 1156 AD, Jaisalmer is widely popular for the golden yellow sandstone used for the construction in the city. This Golden city is crowned by a massive fort that fell to its first siege against Emperor Alaud-din-Khilji who attacked and ransacked the fort massively. Jaisalmer happens to be one of the first provinces to accept the supremacy of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan under the reign of Rawal Sahal Singh. On your tours to Jaisalmer you will be fascinated by the tenacity of this medieval desert city that has braved the onslaughts of men and nature alike.

The best and the most exciting way to reach Jaisalmer, is by train. The railway line winding through the desert offers a splendid view and spotting the golden Jaisalmer Fort just before the train enters Jaisalmer Station is particularly exciting. A daily train service from Jodhpur takes you to Jaisalmer after an overnight journey. The Palace on Wheels, a heritage luxury train is a fabulous option if you can afford it. The nearest airport is also at Jodhpur 500 km away. A bus or rented car will take you to Jaisalmer from Jodhpur.

What to See in Jaisalmer

- Jaisalmer Fort
- Jain Temples
- Laxminath Temple
- Patwon ki Haveli
- Salim Singh ki Haveli
- Nathmalji ki Haveli
- Desert Culture Centre & Museum
- Jaisalmer Folklore Museum

- GovernmentMuseum
- Gadi Sagar
- Camel Safari in the Sam Sand Dunes
- Mool Sagar
- Amar Sagar
- Kuldhara
- KhuriVillage
- AkalWoodFossilPark

Accommodation in Jaisalmer

There are plenty of luxury, and budget hotels in Jaisalmer. Quite a few heritage hotels are also available. Some of the hotels in Jaisalmer are:

- Gorbandh Palace Hotel
- Hotel Rawal
- MandirPalace

5. Cultural Tourism

There is enough scope for the development of cultural tourism in Jaisalmer. The cultural heritage of the district is very rich. There are several ancient first, palaces, religious place, havelis and other buildings, along with the filk-arts and handicrafts which provide a sound base to the development of tourism in the district.

6. Literature

Literacy activity in the district was confined to Jain temples and such other places. Old manu-scripts stored in GYAN BHANDARS of Jain temples were brought to light during the first year of the 20th century.

Jaisalmer had folklore and literature. Local poets composed poems depicting the cultural and social heritage of the area. The story of Mumal and Mahendra is very popular not only in the district but throughout Rajasthan. The most of literature written in Prakrat, Magadhi, Sanskrit, Aprabhasha and Brajdialects. Some of the important books are – Bhagwati Sootra, Naishadha Charitra, Mahakavya Naganada (drama), Anargha Raghava (drama), Vehi Simhar, Vasa Vedatta, Bhashya, Pantanjali Yoga Darshan, Shrinagara Manjari etc.

Among the various Rajasthani paintings described by different intellect and historians, the Jaisalmer art has the most outstanding place. Although, the availability of the paintings are very rare. Regarding sculpture what impresses us most is the huge beautifully carved and popular Jaisalmer fort.

Jaisalmeri paintings more emphasis on the art and sculpture of picture not to colour. The main rules under which this art progressed are Har Raj, Akahag Singh and Mool Raj. They had special love towards art and paintings.

The mother tongue 'MARWARI' have vast majority of the inhabitants. Other linguistic groups are Sindhi, Urdu, Khariboli and Punjabi. The residents of the district speak about 18 languages in all. Marwari belongs to the central group of the Indo-Aryan family also known as the western Rajasthani.

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