ADOPT A TOURIST DESTINATION SCHEME: A STUDY ON SELECTED DESTINATIONS IN KARNATAKA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BELUR, HALEBIDU AND RANGANATHITTU BIRD SANCTUARY

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Abstract : An exploratory study which tries to bring out the effects of 'Adopt a Tourist Destination' scheme introduced by Government of Karnataka in 2014, to develop tourist destinations of the state. The study is confided to 3 selected destinations which are adopted by various corporate under 'Adopt a tourist destinations' scheme. The study goes deep in understanding the multiple perspectives of the scheme with the help of 3 selected destinations namely Belur, Halebidu, and Ranganathittu bird sanctuary. This study would be a great effort in finding the changes made in the destinations after the adoption.

The government of Karnataka has introduced a scheme named 'Adopt a tourist destination' to promote Karnataka tourism on collaboration with Private sectors. Under the scheme 46 tourist spots of Karnataka have been identified by the government being adopted by corporates. Among these 46 destinations, 6 destinations were already adopted by different corporate. This 'Adopt a tourist destination scheme' is a very effective plan of the Karnataka government in developing tourist destinations. The performance and achievement of the scheme should be evaluated. A critical study of the scheme will enable us to know the development taken place at the selected destinations after its adoption by corporate. It also helps us in locating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of 'Adopt a tourist destination' scheme and to give suggestions for improvements and remedial measures and strategies wherever necessary. Many think this is outright commercialisation. But this is a much better option than leaving it an abandoned state and let it decay.

KEY WORDS: Adopt A Tourist destination, Corporates, CSR, MoU, PMU, DOT, Endowment Committee.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Indian tradition has always taught that, humankind is a part of nature and one should look upon all creation with the eyes of a love and respect.

It is tragic that since last few decades, the mad quest for the material end and economical progress in India and abroad has become identical with the exploitation of nature in all its appearances. Today, the entire world is facing a deep crisis and is in the danger of being doomed. The rich forest areas and biological diversities have been relentlessly divested to erect concrete walls. The continuous denuding of forest reserves has led to Global Warming and Greenhouse Effects. Fortunately, this has led to some realization, and now the world has awakened for new beginnings about human responsibility towards nature and heritage.

Tourism is acknowledged as one of the most relevant economic and sociological phenomena of the present time. In this millennium, this sector constitutes a structural element of the dynamics of the global economy, since it has become established as one of the most important sectors worldwide (PITER, 2005). The strategic positioning of peripheral regions may be achieved by identifying aggregated products, the establishment of public-private partnerships (PPPs) and the creation of networks (BREDA; COSTA;

COSTA, 2004). For over two decades, networking has been accepted as a very important factor of competitive advantage, for both regions and companies (PORTER, 1990).

In today's world, companies must compete on a global scale, but they must also adjust to their environment, to become more efficient and effective locally. Networks can play a significant role, since they facilitate access to knowledge, resources, markets and technologies (COSTA et al, 2007). The tourism industry is in a transition phase and is subject to increasingly sophisticated demands. In response, tourist destinations are networking, on a wider scale, to offer a more satisfactory experience to the consumers of tourism (GRAY, 1996). However, Erkus-Öztürk and Eraydin (2010) state that, despite the increasing amount of discussion on the role of networking in tourism; this is not supported by empirical studies and fails to explain how these networks may contribute to the sustainable development of territories. To dispute this idea and, given the importance of partnerships for regional development and the increasing competitiveness in the tourism sector, this study aims to propose a conceptual model of tourism public-private partnerships, as a contribution to successful regional development with the help of the scheme 'Adopt A Tourist Destination' which has been implemented in Karnataka in 2014.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has been undertaken keeping in mind the following specific objectives.
- To examine the nature and importance of the scheme 'Adopt a Tourist Destination' in Karnataka.
- To evaluate the progress at the destination being brought through the scheme.
- To evaluate the present status of the destination based on tourist perception.
- To suggest various effective measures for future development and promotion of tourism at tourist destinations.

1.3 RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

This research was undertaken to analyse the various impacts of 'Adopt A Tourist Destination Scheme' on already adopted tourist destinations especially on Belur, Halebidu and Ranganatittu bird sanctuary

The research is mainly based on **primary data** which has been collected through **Questionnaires and field survey**

For the study the information has been obtained through a well designed structured questionnaire and has been given to the tourists in order to collect sufficient information, keeping in view the objectives of the study. Questionnaire has been administered by the researcher to collect information related to general information about income, age group, locality, opinion regarding the development of the destination, effectiveness of the scheme, personal suggestions etc. Discussions were also held with few tourists and direct visit to the concerned destinations. **Simple Random sampling** was followed in collecting data for the study. Personal opinions and information from the tourists, employees, drivers of the selected destinations regarding the progress of the destination after the adoption were also collected to support the study through unstructured interview method. Personal interview with the officials concerned are also conducted to get the needed information for the analysis.

Secondary data The researcher has also depended on various secondary sources as part of the study. Which include:
- RTI bulletin, Tourism department, Government of India
- Data collected from magazines and news papers and also from some articles in news papers for the use of the survey.
- From various websites of the internet also information has been collected.

2.1 About the scheme "Adopt A Tourist Destination"

In budget speech of 2014-15 Hon'ble Chief Minister has announced the adoption of tourist destination/circuits programme in collaboration with Corporates.

The director of Tourism has reported that Government of India launched "Campaign Clean India" programme and also took up a major social awareness, media campaign under the brand 'Athithidevobhava' by involving public and private stakeholders as part of their Corporate social responsibility. India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) adopted Qutub Minar, New Delhi as a pilot project under Campaign Clean India. ONGC also expressed their willingness to adopt the major monuments under CSR such as Taj Mahal at Agra, Ellora caves, Elephanta caves in Maharastra, Red fort in Delhi, Golkonda fort in Hyderabad and Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu.

Karnataka aptly called as "One State Many Worlds" is the only state that offers all types of experience to any tourists, be it heritage, beaches, pilgrims, adventure, wild life etc., It is home to two world Heritage sites at Hampi, and Pattadakallu and several equally important heritage sites throughout Karnataka. Department of Tourism is mandated to provide basic tourism infrastructure, undertake promotion and publicity of tourist destinations and encourage private investment in tourism sector. The department has identified nearly 319 tourist destinations across the state where tourist facilities need to be provided/ expanded or upgraded. However, there are challenges faced by the department in undertaking developmental works as these tourist destinations are either owned or regulated by Archaeology Survey of India, state Archaeology, Horticulture, Water Resources Deprartment, Muzarai institutions, Mysore palace board etc.,

In order to ensure better experience to the tourists in Karnataka, proper facilities such as basic amenities, interpretation centres, tourist friendly vehicles, proper guides etc., are required at these tourist destinations. The department has initially identified 46 destinations for providing such facilities by the corporate sector. The list is not an exhaustive one and corporate/PSUs can suggest any destination they want to adopt. The list of destinations is enclosed at Annexure 1.

Directorate of tourism has proposed a committee to examine and approve the proposals received from the corporate sector as under:

a) Committee shall approve the proposal submitted by the corporate entity/PSUs should include the activities that are proposed along with their feasibility and budget outlay.

b) Committee shall ensure if any approval is required from various authorities; the committee shall fix the timelines for obtaining the same.

c) Committee can identify other tourist destinations for adoption in addition to the 46 destination indicated in the Annexture-1.

d) Committee can discuss and decide any other issues concerning the facilities and infrastructure to be provided to the tourist destination.

6. Under this programme, Corporates will finance the activities, operations and maintain the facilities on their own rather than transferring the funds to any Government body/department. Corporate willing to adopt such tourist destination will also ensure adequate funding is provided to improve and maintain the facilities for a minimum period of 5 years.

7. Duration of adoption would be for a period of 5 years after signing MoU with the nodal department of tourism. The MoU will be renewed for period of another 5 years if it is mutually agreed between the parties. An independent evaluator appointed by the Directorate of Tourism will periodically evaluate the implementation of the programme.

8. Joint Director (PMU) of Directorate of Tourism will be the Nodal Officer to oversee the adoption programme. Wherever tourist destinations and monuments either belonging to Archaeological Survey of India or require regulatory consent, in such cases due approvals shall be obtained from the concerned authority through joint efforts of Tourism Department.

9. Accordingly, the Director of Tourism has solicited the approval of the Government to launch a Programme for Adoption of Tourist destination in collaboration with Corporates for the 46 tourist destinations/circuits as mentioned in Annexture-1.

After detailed examination of the proposal Government is pleased to issue the following order:

In circumstances explained above approval of the Government is accorded for adoption of identified 46 destinations/circuits or part there of as detailed in Annexture – 1 with the initiatives/activities envisaged under this programme and the mechanism for adoption as per Annexture-2 and Annexture – 3 respectively, with the following conditions.

1. The adoption programme will endeavor to create tourist facilities etc., as given in the Annexture – 2 including the maintainance thereof.
2. The duration of the adoption is 5 years and further extended by 5 years.
3. Corporate under CSR programme shall earmark the funds separately for implementation and maintenance of pragramme and financial and physical progress of the programme shall be reported to the Director of Tourism.

### The initiatives/ activities envisaged under this programme

1. Providing and maintaining the facilities in and around the destination such as clean toilets, cleanliness, souvenir shops, food courts.
2. Training of guides on historical/ cultural importance of the place.
3. Upgrading any existing interpretation centres/ museums.
4. Providing signages, mobile applications, audio guides in different languages.
5. Providing electric cars for senior citizens and maintain them.
6. Illumination of monuments.
7. Refurbishing the toilets, implementation Solid Waste management practice.
8. Rejuvenating any water bodies.
9. Conservation and restoration of monuments(with approval of ASI/SAD)

The above list is illustrative and activities that are to be undertaken would depend on a case to case basis and to be approved by the Committee.

Mechanism for adoption of programme

1. The destinations that are shortlisted by the Department will be presented to the corporate/public undertakings and seek their support in adoption and maintenance of these destinations. This would be popularized either by one to one meeting with corporates or by having road shows.
2. Any corporate entity/PSU interested in adopting the destinations/monuments and improving the facilities will need to submit a proposal to the department as part of their social responsibility (CSR). Joint inspection would be conducted by Joint Director(PMU) the Nodal Officer of the department and the nominated member of the corporate entity/PSU.
3. All cooperation and assistance would be provided to the corporate entity who intend to adopt/upgrade and/or maintain any destination by the DOT including museums, aquariums, parks, water bodies lakes etc., subject to the consent of the parent/Horticulture Department.
4. In order to facilitate speedy approvals and adoption programme, a project implementation committee will be set up to approval the proposals of such CSR initiatives. The committee will be headed by Hon'ble Tourism Minister and involve all the stakeholders from various departments pertaining to that destinations such as ASI, state Archaeology, Kannada and culture, Horticulture, forest, water resources, urban development department, Mujarai institutions, revenue department. The committee also can co opt any other department/board if the destination is owned or tourist destination owned by particular agency/department/board.
5. All necessary approvals compliance with regulation, archaeology and heritage norms, necessary safe guards in carrying out these initiatives shall be the responsibility of the respective department to whom these destinations/monuments belong.

2.2 DESTINATIONS IDENTIFIED FOR THE ADOPTION PROGRAMME:
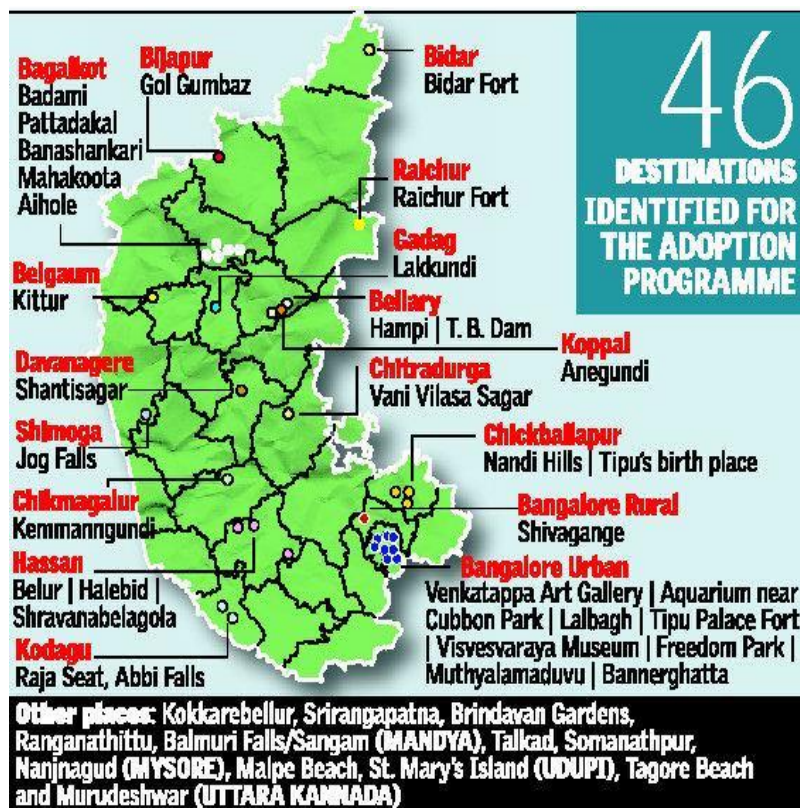
(source : internet)

These are the 46 destinations which are identified Under Adopt a Tourist Scheme in the year 2014. Among these 46 destinations 06 were adopted by different corporate and 40 destinations are now open to the adoption.

3.1 About Belur and Halebidu monuments: Overview

Belur chennakeshava temple is one of the ancient temples in India is 900 years old. It took 120 years and 03 generations to complete the construction. The temple is under the archeological survey of India. The temple is famous for its stone work where one sees many art forms carved out of stones.

Belur was previously called Velapura. It is well known for its marvelous temples built during the rule of the Hoysala dynasty, making it and nearby Halebidu favoured tourist destinations in Karnataka state. These temple complexes have been proposed to be listed under **UNESCO World Heritage Sites.**

The **Chennakeshava Temple**, originally called Vijayanarayana Temple, was built on the banks of the Yagachi River in Belur, by the Hoysala Empire King Vishnuvardhana.

The Hoysalas were genuinely fond of art andarchitecture. During their near 300 year reign, several temples and monuments were built under their patronage. The best of Hoysalan monuments were reserved for Belur. The innovative architecture, beautiful sculptures draw several thousand every year to both Belur and its twin city of Halibeedu.

Halebidu was once capital of Hoysala kingdom. The original name was Dwarasamudra and was twice destroyed by bahumani Sultans which we can see even today. The monuments are an excellent showcase of Hoysala architecture. It is 31 KM from Hassan, there are good roads and road signs. It is the 12th century temple having one of the delicate carvings with the most detailing seen ever. It is one of the **Archeological Survey of India**'s heritage sites of ancient monuments.

3.2 Ranganathittu Bird Sancuary: An outlook

Ranganathittu bird sanctury, also known as **PAKSHI KASHI**, is a bird sanctuary in the Mandya District of the state of Karnataka. It is the largest bird sanctuary in the state about 40 acres in area and comprises 6 islets on the banks of the Kaveri River. This bird sanctuary is situated 3km away from the historic town of Srirangapatna and 16km north of Mysore. The sanctuary attracted about 2.90 lakh visitors during 2011-2012, which shows its notability as an important bird sanctuary.

The islets came into being when an embankment across the Kaveri River was built in 1648 by the then Mysore King Kantirava Narasimharaja Wodeyar. The ornithologist, Doctor Salim Ali observed that the islets formed an important nesting ground for birds and persuaded the Wodeyar Kings of Mysore to declare the area a **"wildlife sanctuary"** in 1940. The Forest Department of Karnataka State is maintaining the bird sanctuary and makes great efforts to improve the sanctuary, which includes purchase of nearby private lands to expand the protected area.

4.1 Major findings

Karnataka as the tourism tagline says 'One state many worlds' with wide variety of tourism potentials, such as natural beauty places, temples, historical monuments, flora & fauna, special culture and tradition etc. having number of opportunities for tourism. But the development is very limited and most of the potentials are untapped here.

- It is clear from the study that most of the tourists and employees of the destinations are not aware about the scheme ' Adopt A Tourist Destination Scheme'
- The participation of local people in the development of Tourism is comparatively good.
- It is understood from the researchers observation that government authorities, and the management of the destinations (endowment committees) are taking special efforts to develop the destination.
- From the survey, it is clear that compared to earlier days Belur, Halebidu and Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary have been improved and the role of corporate in this improvements is not much good as expected.
- It is clear from the study that Belur, Halebidu and Ranganathittu bird sanctuary are not having good accessibility and enough infrastructure facilities to satisfy the needs of the tourists and in this area Corporates who adopted the destinations should concerntrate more.
- The survey gives the information that most of the tourists are supporting 'Adopt A Tourist Destination' programme and the involvement of Corporates in developing the tourist sites of Karnataka.
- Accommodation facilities at Belur, Halebidu and Ranganathittu are satisfactory; still there is a need to develop the accommodation facilities to comfort the visitors.
- Entry fee, parking charges, and product and service cost at the destinations are reasonably charged and the employees of the destinations are paid well. But foreign tourists are not satisfied with the entry fee at Ranganathittu bird sanctuary.
- In Ranganathittu bird sanctuary most of the tourists are disappointed with the boat ride. It is too short and no interest shown in identification of bird species during the boat ride.
- The study shows the need for increased and effective marketing and promotional activities in regarding the destination promotion and development. The adopted corporate should concentrate more on it.
- Most of the tourists opinion that the tourist destination management by private/corporate is better that the management by the government. Though we can say adopt a tourist destination scheme is a good idea of the Government of Karnataka in developing the tourist destinations.
- Even after the development there are no much changes or developments taken place in the adopted sites. Corporates are not presently maintaining and managing the sites, and the destinations are not supervised by the corporate representatives.
- Government responses and cooperation in the destination development to the adopters is satisfactory.
- Adopters can get financial benefits out of the adoption.

4.2 SUGGESTIONS

- Based on the data analysis and research the following suggestions are made for promoting the tourism through the scheme 'Adopt a Tourist Destination' in Karnataka.
- Karnataka is a state with immense potential but is not properly projected as one therefore; it is not improved and developed over all. Government as well as private organizations can jointly take measures to improve the tourism resources of Karnataka.
- 'Adopt a Tourist Destination' scheme is not much effective in the destination development presently. Government can form a committee to examine the progress of the destinations and the works done by the adopted corporate.
- Local people who are having a good knowledge of places, routes should be encouraged to take up guide for tour profession.
- Most of the people are not aware of the scheme and its expected benefits. Proper information should be given to the public by using various media. It may increase the number of adopters.
- Proper implementation of the scheme will enable the new corporate to adopt other identified destinations.
- Awarding the best adopter at the end of their adoption and maintenance period will help in motivating the adopters to develop the destination.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Travel and Tourism is considered as the world's largest industry. The industry is growing faster than world economy on cross output, value addition, capital investment and employment. It is projected that this smokeless industry has the potential to more than double its contribution to the world economy.

'Adopt A Tourist Destination' scheme is a good decision of the Karnataka government in developing the tourist destinations in the state. It will encourage the private sectors to involve in the development of tourism resources within the state. Even though they are getting financial benefits out of the adoption, the destinations will have benefits, and the tourism industry also can be developed through this scheme. If the scheme is implemented properly and the corporate are motivated to develop the destination by putting their whole efforts, then definitely there is no matter, the tourist destinations will attract more number of tourists to the state.

Local people are interested to involve in various tourism activities Karnataka, it is one of the major source of income to the people and also provides market for their local products. At the end the need for the close coordination between private and public sector tourism organization at different levels is the key to success in tourism development.

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