

# BIHAR AS A FLUORESCENT TOURIST DESTINATION: PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

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## **Abstract:**

The word 'Bihar' owes its origin to the "Viharas" built by Lord Buddha who attained spiritual enlightenment on this land and preached love, peace and tolerance. The erstwhile capital city of Patliputra of Emperor Ashoka is the present day state capital Patna. The history of Bihar indicates a rich heritage inherited from various dynasties & great personalities. It has immense potential for tourism activities like religious tourism, heritage tourism, natural tourism. Apart from that, the wildlife, birds & sanctuaries hold vast potential for ecotourism. But, the tourism potential of the state for generating much needed income & employment remains under utilized. The hospitality & tourism industry this is increasingly being viewed as a viable and attractive career option with best growth prospects. The tourism and hospitality industry is rapidly expanding and the demand for well trained manpower is constantly on the rise. Moreover the diversity of role in tourism & Hospitality Management is greater than in any other profession.

**Key Words: Tourism, Hospitality, Diversity, Bihar, etc.**

## **Introduction**

Bihar has been distinguished for its spiritual outlook since time immemorial. It is the birth place of two religions, Buddhism & Jainism, and also the birthplace of Guru Govind Singh. The state is also well known for the Muslim Shrines, Hindu Temples and association with Gandhian movements. Bihar has always recorded good number of religious tourists from China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand especially in the form of Buddhist pilgrimage. For the promotion of tourism

Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC) was established in 1981. Bihar is bound on the north by Nepal, on the east by West Bengal, on the west by Uttar Pradesh and on the south by newly formed Jharkhand State. Boundless fertility of its soil, mineral wealth, other natural resources such as forest wealth and potential Manpower embodied in its population. The river Ganga, cutting straight across Bihar from west to east has rendered the region fertile and plentiful. Bihar falls under sub-tropical humid climate. Temperature varies from a

maximum of 43°C in summer to a minimum of around 5°C in the winters. Relative humidity can go up to 100% during summer. It receives medium to heavy rainfall in the monsoon.

The History of Bihar as a region is very rich and eventful. This is due to the fact that Bihar was a center of power, learning and culture. It has been a cradle of Indian civilization and the birth place of two of the major religions that have emanated from India: Buddhism and Jainism. Much of the ancient Indian text written outside of the religious epics has been written in this ancient land, Arthashashtra and Kama sutra being the most prominent. The first known republic, a state without a sovereign king, existed in this region more than two thousand years back. Bihar one of the most sacred place of various religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism & Islam, Many tourist travel to Bihar to visit their pilgrimage. Bihar is the land of the magnificent Ganges, beautiful flora and fauna, attractive tourist destinations like the world famous ancient seats of learning like Nalanda & Vikaramshila, Madhubani Paintings (Mithila Arts), enchanting Sujuni work, gorgeous Bhagalpuri Silk, rich mineral resources, world famous fruits such as the delicious litchi (lychee) and mangoes, Mahabodhi Temple, a Buddhist shrine and UNESCO World Heritage Site is also situated in Bihar. Mahatma Gandhi Setu, Patna, is one of the longest bridges in the world. The history of Bihar indicates a rich heritage inherited from various dynasties & great personalities. It has immense potential for tourism activities like religious tourism, heritage tourism, natural tourism. Apart from that, the wildlife, birds & sanctuaries hold vast potential for ecotourism. But, the tourism potential of the state for generating much needed income & employment remains underutilized.



Bihar is famous for religious tourism & cultural heritage sites. Historical importance of Bihar has been established again with the discovery of 'biggest ever Buddhist stupa' at Kesariya by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI). The most important religious & heritage sites are Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Vaishali, Valmikinagar, Maner sharif, Motihari etc. Places of tourist attraction in the state can be broadly classified as;

- Places of Religious Importance and Archeological/Historical Sites,
- Wildlife Sanctuaries and National Parks,
- Adventure tourism,
- Arts and Craft, Fairs & Festivals & Dances.

### Places to Visit in Bihar:

Nalanda University, Bodhi Tree, Muchalinda Lake , Griddhakuta Peak , Rajgir Hot Springs , Navlakha Palace , Hieun Tsang Memorial Hall , Jalmandir Temple , Patna Museum , Bhikhnatohari ,Brindavan ,Ashoka pillars ,Valmikinagar and many more.

### Fair and Festivals:

Sonepur Fair, Pitrapakash Fair, Rajgir Mahotsav, Chhat and Holi.

### Objectives:

- To explore the history of tourism & hospitality in Bihar.
- To examine the strength, weakness, threat and opportunities of Bihar tourism.
- To learn the options for new tourism projects and potential in Bihar.

### SWOT ANALYSIS of Bihar Tourism:

#### Strengths

- Bihar has a rich inventory of world class tourism resources, both natural as well amanmade which include picturesque landscape, wildlife sanctuaries &national park, hot springs, cultural heritage sites unique Mithilila paintings etc.

#### Weaknesses

- Lack of security & safety measures for tourists which affects the perception & tourism potential of the state
- Lack of Tourism infrastructure such as Tourist Information Centres, trasportation facilities, public conveniences such as toilets, refreshment centers etc.

#### Opportunities

Bihar has enormous potential for development of new product ideas, some of which are the latest craze in the western world today.

- Heritage Tourism: The state has an abundance of historical places, Religious Places, Archeological Sites and forts, which can be suitably renovated and opened up for tourism.
- Health Tourism: Spring sites have tremendous potential for health tourism due to their medical values.
- Entertainment Tourism: Bihar have a great potential for features like; entertainment complexes such as amusement parks, water parks, cable car rides, aquariums, casinos, sound and light shows, etc

- Waterfront Tourism: Bihar has significant potential for water-based tourism.
- Cultural Tourism: Bihar has rich cultural heritage which is exhibited through the various fairs and festivals and

### Threats

- Being location in isolation in terms of development, the State is facing challenges, which directly and indirectly curb the growth of tourism. The existing infrastructure, safety & Security, local awareness and others are the major hindrance for the development of the tourism in the State.

### OPTIONS AND IDENTIFICATION OF TOURISM PROJECTS

Bihar has a wide range of tourism potential, which has not been utilized to its fullest because of the critical geographical location of the state, insecure environment and inaccessibility. While exploring the options for development of tourism products, Tourist Composition, future target segment and potential tourist activities etc have been considered. For this The Consultants have carried out an in-depth study of literature and views of local people, collected through opinion surveys and on-the-spot reconnaissance to assess the ranges of tourists destinations in the state which are still unassessed and unexplored. The Consultants have identified a few candidate sites, which are proposed to be included in the existing tourist circuits, like:

#### Circuit New tourist sites

- Buddhist Circuit : Gusei Ashok Dham etc
- Jain Circuit :Luchuar , Nawada
- Ramayan Circuit : Gidheshwar ,Balirajpur, Sangrampur etc
- Islamic/ Sufi Circuit : Phulwari Sharif ,Amarpur etc
- Temple Circuit: Vishnupad, Singheshwar, Brahampur, Kusheshwar Asthan etc
- Historical Circuit: Kumrahar ,Palasi , Daudnagar ,Bhagwanpur , Chainpur , Dalaur etc

Apart from that, the consultants have also identified some other tourism places for promotion of more tourism activities like, arts & crafts, urban haat,fair &festivals, waterfront development, health tourism etc.

- **Arts & Crafts & Rural Tourism**

Mithila paintings are famous the world over for their intricate designs and motifs. The folk paintings of the women of Mithila are the exclusive monopoly of the women artists. Darbhanga (Darbhanga distt.) & Madhubani (Madhubani distt.) have identified for for rural tourism.

- **Urban Haat at Madhubani and Bhagalpur:**

Like Dilli Hatt, same kind of Haat can be proposed at Madhubani and Bhagalpur. Silk is very famous at Bhagalpur & Mithila paintings at Madhubani are famous the world over for their intricate designs & motifs. There will be provision of Stalls showing various arts, crafts and textile, Products of the state lined traditional art & Culture.

- **Fairs & Festivals**

The cattle fair at Sonapur is very popular. Chhau is the most vibrant and popular dance form of Bihar performed by the men only. This traditional dance form can be promoted as a cultural element of rural tourism.

- **Cultural Centres**

Amba Chowk (Muzaffarpur distt), Deo (Aurangabad) etc centers have a great deal of potential for spreading cultural

awareness among people and promoting tourism through culture.

- **Health Tourism**

The hot springs containing sulphur cures physical ailments and promotes good health. These places have potentiality for development of therapeutic tourism, by using mineral water & other elements of curative quality. Two hot spring sites i.e, Sitakund & Makhdumkund have identified for establishment of health resort.

- **Waterfront Tourism**

The river 'Ganges' offers potential for development of water based sports & activities along its stretch. Riverfront development has to be undertaken at the identified places like Patna, Bhagalpur to promote tourism.

- **Shopping Tourism**

Bhagalpur is known for world famous silk. Silk shopping can be promoted at markets in major tourist centers in Bihar. Bhagalpur has potential to be developed exclusively as a silk market.

## **PROPOSED TOURISM PROJECTS:**

The consultants have identified few major projects to bring notice for the development of tourism in the State like:

- **Development of Garden & theme park** around Buddhist Stupa at Rajgir, District Nalanda (Bihar), Ancient Vikramshila University at Antichak, Bhagalpur, around Tomb of Sher Shah Suri at Sasaram, Distt. Rohtas, around excavated remains of ancient Vaishali at Kolhua, District Muzaffarpur, around remains of fort of Nand Dynasty rulers, Nandargarh, at Rajgir and Bodh Gaya, excavated remains of ancient Vaishali at Kolhua, District Muzaffarpur.

- **Development of Herbal Garden and tanks** in ancient Site of Patliputra at Kumrahar.
- **Consolidation and Development** of Lauriya Nandangarh.
- **Development of Goga Bill Pakshi-Vihara** (Bird Sanctuary), Katihar.
- **Development of Kabar Lake Bird Sanctuary**, Begusarai.
- **Holistic Healing cum Rejuvenation Centre** at Sita kund, Munger.
- **River Front Development and Floating Restaurant**, Patna and Bhagalpur.
- **Urban Haat** at Madhubani and Bhagalpur.
- **Tourist Resort** at Manihari, Katihar.

## **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESMENT**

Tourism must be directly correlated to the resources that are available & this aspect needs to be closely looked into very carefully. Development of tourism itself has some positive & negative effects. So, before suggesting any project the social & environmental impact assessment is very essential. These impacts can be especially critical in countries like India & region like Bihar that still have strong historical & cultural traditional society. All the identified tourist spots & its impact has assessed & proper mitigation measure also suggested.

## **MARKETING STRATEGY AND PROMOTION PROGRAMME**

The marketing strategy should also include the need to portray a favorable but realistic image of the State. Image building is especially important because of the publicities that have taken place about the natural calamities as well as ethnic development. Develop the perception of Bihar in the major source market areas of India and abroad as a destination offering quality attraction, facilities and experiences. Design and execute marketing activities which build on Bihar- distinctive features and advantages. Expand penetration in the Asian markets, particularly Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and European markets, viz. U.K., Germany, U.S.A., Australia etc. Publicize tourism through newspaper holiday supplements and editorial coverage, audiovisual material - slide, film and video shows for use in travel seminars, world TVs, etc.

## **ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

Tourism is highly labor intensive as compared to any other industry. The Economic & Social Commission for Asia and

Pacific (ESCAP) study report on 'Economic Impact of Tourism in India' revealed that 1.2 international tourist visits provide employment to one person. Similarly, 17 domestic tourists generate employment for one person. The Department of Tourism (Planning and Measurement Methods) has adopted 1.358 as Employment Multiplier. By using the adopted Employment Multiplier (1.358) indirect employment after implementation of Tourism Development Plan would be 22.82 Lakhs and direct employment to 16.81 Lakhs persons in 2021.

**List of University /Institutes offering degree course in Hotel or Hospitality Management in Bihar:**

S. No	Name of the University/Institution	Place
1	Institute of Hotel Management and CT	Hajipur
2	Magadh University	Bodh Gaya
3	IGNOU	Patna
4	Shanti sewa samiti's Indian institute of hotel management college	Patna
5	Hope institute of hospitality Management	Patna
6	H I H T	Patna
7	Dr.Zakir Husain Institute of hotel management	Patna
8	Aptech aviation and hospitality Academy	Patna

Bihar being one of the tourism economy based state has enormous need for skilled manpower. Hotel management graduates have the wide application in the diverse fields of Tourism and Hospitality. In fact the tourism state policy of Bihar focuses on the manpower development through training.

**TOURISM POTENTIAL**

Bihar has immense potential for various tourism activities, first and foremost being religious tourism. The history of

Bihar indicates a rich heritage inherited from various dynasties & great personalities. The archeological & historical value of this heritage still remains to be explored & recognized in the international scenario although there is an influx of foreign tourists in the present situation. The wildlife, birds & sanctuaries hold vast potential for nature-based eco-tourism. The river Ganga, all along its stretch offers potential for water based sports & riverfront activities.

But, the tourism potential of the state for generating much needed income & employment remains under utilized.

Though the state has high tourism potential, owing to lack of infrastructure facilities such as, transport, communication facilities, accommodation and other tourism supported facilities, most part of it remains unexplored by the tourist.

## **TOURISM POLICY**

To strengthen the tourism, Product Diversification/Improvement is needed. Religious tourisms & Wild Life Sanctuary are the mainstream activities in Bihar. The natural resources in the state of like springs, rivers scenic beauty and wild life reserves has not received enough attention and did not grow to its fullest potential. To strengthen the tourism in the State, the Consultants have suggested a policy for the State to develop a sustainable tourism.

- Diversification of tourism product/improvement.
- The inter-State tourism circuit is required to prevent the diversion of tourist flow.
- Establish Tourist Information Center at all District Headquarters of the state.
- An urgent need felt for requirement of overall improvement of infrastructure facilities and also providing better
- quality facilities in places of tourist attractions.

## **OPPORTUNITIES IN TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SECTOR**

The Tourism and Hospitality sector is growing and needs more and more personnel with a higher education, a good grasp of the industry, sound management skills and international experience. Our approach suits future employers: Two of every three graduates start their careers less than three months after graduation or final year of Tourism & Hospitality. The Hospitality and Tourism industry has also expanded and is no longer limited to only five star Hotel and now includes AIRLINES,CATERING SERVICE,TRAVEL AGENCIES,CRUISE LINERS,HEALTH RESORTS,NIGHT CLUBS, TOURISM & HOTEL MANAGEMENT COLLEGES and many more. Now a days Hotel & Tourism both domestic & foreign has grown, new avenues such as Ecotourism, Health Tourism have developed in India. The hospitality & tourism industry this is increasingly being viewed as a viable and attractive career option with best growth prospects. The tourism and hospitality industry is rapidly expanding and the demand for well trained manpower is constantly on the rise. Moreover the diversity of role in tourism & Hospitality Management is greater than in any other profession. Hotel requires trained staff for these entire roll. There is high demand for Indian hotel manager and staff in the entire department such as HOUSEKEEPING, FRONT OFFICE, FOOD & BEVERAGE (Service), FOOD & BERVAGE (PRODUCTION), and many more. In international Tourism & Hospitality industry. Around 20 to 30 % Tourism & Hotel management graduated go to foreign countries.



## Conclusion

Tourism is increasing in Bihar at a very steady pace and it can be said that there is a sure effect of technical exposure received from the tourism and hospitality study to the service providers which is satisfying the perceived service level of the tourist and compelling them to give more visit again and again. The government needs to work little more for the improvement in infrastructural facilities and effective tie-ups for tourism and hospitality education as well as tourism and hospitality industries.

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