

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN GUJARAT : PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS

Dr.Yogesh N. Vansiya, Dr.Subadra Ragothaman

### ABSTRACT

Tourism is a rapidly evolving industry in the global marketplace. Tourism in India has grown substantially over the last three decades. Foreign tourist arrivals during 1997 were 2,374,094 as compared to 2, 2867,860 in 1996, an increase of 3.8%. India's share in the world tourist market at the end of 1996-97 was 0.39 per cent. Foreign exchange earnings in the same year were estimated at Rs. 10,418 crore. Tourism has become one of the largest foreign exchange earners of the country. Domestic tourism's contribution to the generation of employment is very high. The tourism's contribution to GDP of the country has been 5.9% in 2003-04, while employment in tourism sector both direct and indirect, has been 41.8 million in the same year, which accounts for 8.78% of total employment in the country. Another important feature of the industry, is its contribution to national integration, preservation of natural as well as cultural environments. The state of Gujarat has taken a number of steps to promote tourism. This paper examines the progress and prospects of tourism in this state. The state has visualized various event based tourism which strengthens the prospects of Gujarat tourism in the near future.

**Keywords:** Gujarat, Tourism, Eco-tourism.

### I. Introduction

Tourism is a rapidly evolving industry that has become increasingly competitive in the global marketplace. According to a World Tourism Organization report, tourism has the unique capacity of generating trade and investment directly at the local level, as tourists and entrepreneurs seek new destinations. It can contribute significantly to rural development, agricultural transformation, community enrichment and social empowerment.

The Tourism satellite Account for India has brought out that tourism's contribution to GDP of the country has been 5.9% in 2003-04, while employment in tourism -sector both direct and indirect, has been 41.8 million in the same year, which accounts for 8.78% of total employment in the country. Though the growth in tourism in India has been impressive, India's share in global tourist arrivals is quite insignificant. However, earning per tourist is highest for India in compared to neighboring countries. It is universally acknowledged that the tourism resources of India have the potential to generate

significantly higher levels of demand from the domestic and international markets, and if exploited intelligently in a manner, it can prove to be the engine of growth for the economy.

Another important feature of the industry, which is of significance to India, is its contribution to national integration, preservation of natural as well as cultural environments and enrichment and heritage properties and helps the survival of arts forms, crafts and culture. Over 382 million domestic tourists visiting different parts of the country every year return with a better appreciation of the cultural diversity and understanding of the people living in different regions of the country.

### **III. Literature Review**

Ecotourism has been proposed as a viable economic activity that can minimize negative human impacts on wildlife habitat and provide an incentive to preserve natural areas. Ecotourism is a proxy market designed to align consumers' preferences for recreation with the protection of environmental assets. Because it does not necessarily address the direct protection of those assets, it is prone to market failure. Promoting ecotourism may actually distract from more appropriate means of environmental protection.

Tourism in natural areas has been touted for its potential to allow sustainable development of ecosystems and to provide incentives to preserve these areas instead of converting them to other uses. A particular variety, ecotourism, stresses minimal human impact on native ecosystems and cultures. Ecotourism is demonstrating some promise as a profitable and relatively non-damaging form of economic enterprise.

Tourism is evidently a large industry with potential for growth. Rising income also has increased the demand for environmental amenities (Randall 1987). Touted as a low-impact alternative to traditional tourism (Eadington and Smith 1992, Roxe 1998), ecotourism has been called "responsible travel that conserves natural environments and sustains the wellbeing of local cultures" (Ecotourism Society in Wheat 1998:10). The stated purposes of ecotourism are to raise the public's awareness of the environment, to sensitize travelers to nature and its processes, and to reduce negative impacts of human activities on natural areas (Sirakaya and McLellan 1998).

Recreation is one of the benefits of protecting natural areas. Others include habitat protection, biodiversity preservation, soil formation, nutrient recycling,

and control of water and air pollution (Dixon and Shennan 1991). Protected areas can provide resilience and stability in ecosystems and maintain numerous natural services (Heywood and Watson 1995, Perrings 1995, Tumer et al. 1995). The values of these amenities must be weighed when considering actions that affect the conservation of natural areas (Weisbrod 1964, Knltilla 1967, Dixon and Sherman 1991).

Returns to ecotourism have encouraged the preservation of elephant (*Elaphas indicus*) habitat in Thailand (Dixon and Shennan 1991, McNeely and Dobias 1991) and protection of wildlands on Mount Kinju, South Korea (Lee et al. 1997). Ecotourism has been seen as aiding in the conservation of primate habitat in Zaire, harp seal (*Pagophilus groenlandicus*) habitat in Labrador, and Costa Rican rainforest (Farrell 1992). Ideally, providing ecotourism is consistent with providing other, complementary ecosystem functions (Dixon and Sherman 1990). In this way, conservationists hope that ecotourism is proxy market for those other items of value, including wildlife conservation. The ecotourism market itself may contain negative externalities-costs imposed on others and ignored in the operation of market exchange.

### **III. Indian Tourism Scenario**

Tourism in India has grown substantially over the last three decades. Foreign tourist arrivals during 1997 were 2,374,094 as compared to 2,286,860 in 1996, an increase of 3.8%. India's share in the world tourist market at the end of 1996-97 was 0.39 per cent. Foreign exchange earnings in the same year were estimated at Rs. 10,418 crore and for 1997-98 it was Rs. 11,264 crore. Thus tourism has become one of the largest foreign exchange earners of the country. At the same time domestic tourism's contribution to the generation of employment is very high.

Tourism Sector's performance during 2004 was exceptionally high with 19% increase in tourist arrivals and 32.9% increase in foreign exchange earnings compared to 2003. Foreign Tourist arrivals in 2004, was 3.37 million, a growth of 23.9 per cent over 2003. In 2004 the number of foreign tourists visiting India increased over 23.5 per cent to cross the 3-million mark for the first time. This signals the sector's potential for rapid progress. The total number of foreign tourist's visits in the country in 2004 was 3.37 million. India has, an astounding figure of 367.6 million (2004) domestic tourists' visits and has a strong foundation for development of tourism in general. Similarly, foreign exchange earnings from tourist arrival also grew by 37.0 per cent to \$4.8 billion in 2004 from \$3.5 billion a year ago.

The tourist attractions of India include historical monuments, places of religious importance, mountain and beach resorts, wild life and interesting ecosystems, places with facilities for adventure, water and winter sports, etc. India has immense potential to be a leading tourist destination.

The Department of Tourism has (i) taken a focused approach to develop infrastructure; (ii) given importance to marketing India as a clear destination by branding 'Incredible India'; and (iii) given utmost importance to Human Resource Development activities.

The increase in tourist arrivals can be attributed to the massive government - sponsored 'Incredible India' promotion campaign undertaken in key overseas markets. Steps taken by the government to develop new markets can also be a factor. Chart one shows the tourist inflow in India from major developed as well developing countries of the world especially during the economic boom era of 1995-2005.

The year 2006 has been a highly successful year for India. For the fourth successive year, India witnessed a positive growth in foreign tourist arrivals, reaching a level of 4.43 million against 2.38 million during 2002. The growth rate of 13.04% during 2006 was achieved over 2005 and the share of India in world tourism is expected to be around 0.52%. Foreign exchange earnings has reached US\$ 6569.34 in 2006 and marked an increase of 14.63% over 2005 (US \$ 5730.86). In absolute rupee terms, the increase in foreign exchange earnings during the year 2006 was Rs. 4431.31 crores over 2005. Tourism is the third largest net earner of foreign exchange next to garments, gem and jewellery industry, recording earnings of US \$6569.34 million in 2006 (Rs29603.56crores). India's share in the total global tourist arrivals and earnings remained quite insignificant at 0.52% of the world arrivals and the percentage of share of tourism receipts for 2006 was 0.90%. The table one gives an idea of foreign tourist in India.

The Chart two gives an idea about the growth and hence the importance of tourist activity in India. From chart three it is clear that tourist's activities are gaining in importance in the economy. The contribution of 8 percent to the GDP is significant. Tourism activity if developed can provide opportunities for the development of backward regions of the economy. The positive impact of tourism on employment is indicated in the table one. Since the employment related to tourism does not demand high skilled labor, it can provide opportunities to the absorption of labor in India.

#### **IVa. Profile of Gujarat Tourism**

In Gujarat total flow of tourist in the year of 2006 – 07 was 12.34 million. It has recorded a growth of 15% over the previous year. Growth of 18.5% was observed in the tourist flow from foreign countries during 2006-07, with a number of more than 2 Lacs foreign tourists in 2006-07 and around 1.75 Lacs in 2005-06.

Gujarat is a land which has the best eco tourism opportunities. Eco-friendly recreational avenues like boating, camping and picnic spots are favorite recreational outings for local as well as tourists in Gujarat. Gujarat cities have magnificent gardens which are maintained in natural settings, enhancing their exquisite beauty with fountains and fountain shows.

#### **IVb. Tourism Policies of the Gujarat States**

The salient features of tourism policies of the Gujarat States is as follows. The States Tourism Policy (2003-2010) under “Gujarat Infrastructure Agenda - Vision 2010” prepared by Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB) highlights diversifications of tourism products in order to attract more tourists. Comprehensive development of pilgrimage centers, event based tourism, creating adequate facilities for budget tourist, strengthening of infrastructure, particularly in Special Tourism Areas are the other aspects of tourism policy. Government would also encourage building effective linkages with the relevant economic agents and agencies such as the national and international tour operators and travel agents of repute, hotel chains and global institutions connected with tourism such as WTO.

Gujarat has been recognized as one of the most powerful industrial states in India. The state is among the top six major states and it contributes on an average 6 per cent of total GDP. In the last decade the economy has performed well and registered an impressive growth of 7.14 percent. In recent years, some of the service sectors like communication and education have flourished well which have substantial contribution to the State’s economy.

Gujarat has hitherto, not been a tourist oriented state. Basically, it has been an outbound market. The Gujaratis have a reputation of going out of their state due to the historical nature of their outbound mercantile connections. Gujarat is yet to exploit their tourism resources.

However, today the situation is fast changing. Gujarat has started taking stock of its vast cultural and natural resources; its unique terrain and wildlife; its most

distinctive form of architectural monuments; and its intense spiritual activities. The tourism sector contributes 2 to 3 per cent of State GDP and generates 0.6 million to 0.7 million employment.

#### **IVc. Tourist Attractions**

With a seacoast of about 1650 kms, Gujarat is renowned for its beaches, temple towns and historic capitals. Added attractions are wildlife sanctuaries, hill resorts, and natural grandeur. Sculpture, handicrafts, arts also make the state rich. Amongst the popular tourist destinations of Gujarat are Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Jamnagar, Dwarka, Patan, Vadodara, Pavagadh, Champaner, Surat, Saputara, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Somnath, Junagadh, Uperkot, Porbandar, Kutch and Bhuj.

The available resources, entrepreneurial skills of its people, the existing market dynamics, and lucrative policies of the Government are propelling rapid growth of tourism. The 1650 km. coastline of the state is dotted with lovely beaches such as Ahmedpur Mandvi, Kutch Mandvi, Ubhrat, Tithal and Nargol. Dwaraka and Somnath are pilgrim destinations of profound interest to the religious minded people while for monument lovers all over the world, the sacred Jain temples of Palitana & the Sun temple of Modhera epitomise splendid architectural beauty. Lothal and Dholavira have unique archaeological significance.

Gujarat is known for its colourful people, whose handicrafts are renowned all over India for their colourful embroideries and hand-woven work. One of the most unique terrains in India are found in the region of Kutch, which has a vast grassland called Banni and miles and miles of moons caped terrain, the home of colourful nomads and people with a unique desert culture. The only two Indus Valley Civilisation ruins in India are found in Gujarat at Dholavira in Kutch and Lothal near Ahmedabad. Even dinosaur fossils have been discovered at Balasinor some 85 kilometres away from Ahmedabad.

The cities of Gujarat such as Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat are known for their shopping and dynamic entrepreneurship. Today, they offer plenty of diversion to tourists with museums, amusement and water parks, entertainment complexes and shopping centres. Modern Gujarat is also famous for national level institutions such as the Indian Institute of Management, National Institute of Design, the famous Amul Dairy- a cooperative society, the Institute of Rural Management, the Space Application Centre and many other institutions of repute. Gujarat Tourism, now, offers visitors contemporary and exciting ways of

entertainment. The state-of-the-art multiplexes, amusement complexes, water parks and theme parks near Ahmedabad offer an exhilarating experience to the traveller. The state of late has also witnessed an astronomical boom in the entertainment sector.

#### **IVd. Tourists Arrival Trend**

In the year 2003, the total tourist arrival in the state was 79.31 lac. The tourist traffic has been declining over the last few years in the state, from 115 lac in 1999 to 61.37 lac in 2002, which can be partially attributed to earthquake in Bhuj. The tourist traffic has picked up again in the year 2003. Gujarat accounted for 2.1% of domestic tourist arrival in the year 2002 and 0.7% for foreign tourist arrival.

Gujarat Tourism has undertaken extensive efforts to develop tourism activities and to attract greater number of tourists. With the celebration of festivals like Navaratri Mahotsav, Patangotsav, Sharadotsav and Rannotsav, the State intend to put the rich culture of Gujarat and its various places of pilgrimages on the world map.

Gujarat has immense potential to become a major tourist destination. Its historical monuments represent the great religions of Asia Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism.

Key Initiatives undertaken by the Government, for Generation of Skilled Manpower<sup>1</sup>

- Many institutes of Hospitality and Hotel Management are established in Gujarat to meet the requirement of the trained manpower in the emerging tourism sector.
- There are other private Hotel Management Institutes in the state to provide trained manpower
- More than 2000 fairs and festivals are celebrated in the State such as Navratri, Uttaranyana / Makar Sankranti, Sharad Poornima, Mahashivaratri melas, Tarnetar Fair, Kvant Fair, Chitra Vichitra Fair, Dangs Durbar, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.vibrantgujarat.com/focus-areas/tourism.aspx> (accessed on 5/09/2011)

- The Gujarat Government has created successful events like Rann Utsav, Modhera Dance Festival, International Kite Festival, Vibrant Gujarat, etc.
- Infrastructure development and basic amenities have been strengthened since 2006 with an annual budget of INR100 crore
- Tourism department has rationalised various taxes like the luxury tax, entertainment tax, sales tax etc
- A Joint Venture Company (JVC) is formed with IL&FS IDC for understanding development of tourism and civil aviation projects under Public Private Partnership (PPP) at identified location.

In Gujarat the strength of tourism as industry is identified. The strength involves Religious Tourism, Archeological and heritage Tourism, Cultural Tourism, Event- based Tourism, Business Tourism, Entertainment and Recreational Tourism, Wild-life Tourism, Well-Being Tourism.

From Chart four it is clear that Gujarat attracts around 12 million domestic tourists per annum (2006 – 07)<sup>2</sup> and Gujarat has large number of theme restaurants, multiplexes and water parks. More than 2000 Fairs and Festivals – Important state for Event-based tourism especially based on Navratri, Kite Festival and Tarnetar Fair etc.

#### **IVe. Vision and Tourism Policy-Highlights**

Gujarat Infrastructure Agenda - Vision 2010 prepared by Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board (GIDB) is the first "Holistic Plan" for infrastructure development in Gujarat. The Government of Gujarat has embarked upon a mission with a vision to develop and promote tourism as an “Engine of Growth” and to bring Gujarat on the national and international tourist map. The main objective of the States Tourism Policy (2003-2010) is to undertake intensive development of tourism in the State and thereby increase employment opportunities. The following related objectives are detailed with main objectives.

- Identify and develop tourist destinations and related activities.
- Diversifications of tourism products in order to attract more tourists through a varied consumer choice.
- Comprehensive development of pilgrimage centers as tourist destinations.

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<sup>2</sup>Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd (TCGL)

- Create adequate facilities for budget tourists.
- Strengthen the existing infrastructure and develop new ones where necessary.
- Creation of tourism infrastructure so as to preserve handicrafts, folk arts and culture of the state and thereby attract more tourists.
- Event (Festival) based Tourism

The Government plans to adopt the following strategy towards the private sector with the objective of securing its active involvement in leading development of tourism in the State. Government will encourage building effective linkages with the relevant economic agents and agencies such as the national and international tour operators and travel agents of repute, hotel chains and global institutions connected with tourism such as WTO.

Government has taken initiatives to generate large-scale employment through tourism sector. Innovative products such as camel safari in Kutch, horse riding in Aravalli hill ranges, paragliding in Saputara, trekking in Dang, Pavagadh, Palitana etc. have been given priority under the current tourism policy. Private entrepreneurs and institutions have been encouraged to develop such facilities. The following projects have been initiated to generate employment through involvement of local people.

- Special project on dissemination and transfer of appropriate technology in Banni of Kutch, Bhavnagar & Valsad districts of Gujarat.
- Gujarat Gram Haat a comprehensive marketing intervention and support for the rural poor in all Districts of Gujarat.
- Swarnjayanti Gram Sadak Yojana (SGSY) for drought proofing in Kutch District of Gujarat.

Gujarat Tourism invariably incorporates community attitudes and cultural values in the design of their various fairs and festivals planned and held through out the year.

#### **IVf. Institutional Development**

The Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd., operating under the aegis of the Department of Tourism undertakes the process of identifying, diversifying and developing tourist destinations and related activities. Gujarat State Finance Corporations (GSFC) has formulated financial assistance schemes for tourism related projects through creating Tourism Venture Capital Funds and Tourism Infrastructure Development and Finance. The projects that are conceived under

the Tourism Policy are structured so as to ensure maximum participation by the private sector. A special emphasis is given for investments from the NRI sector. In developing tourism products, some of the projects have been initiated through BOT. Land Bank Scheme to create physical facility, earmarking certain land on the beaches, tourist places, wayside locations and State/National Highways for the tourism projects both in the rural and urban areas are a few examples. Areas are earmarked in GIDC Estates and Special Economic Zones (SEZ) for tourism projects like hotels, resorts, restaurants and other amenities to be developed through private sector. The Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd. has invited private sector with a view to create an attractive tourist destination in an area of 1400 Ha of land, downstream of the Sardar Sarovar Dam consisting of light deciduous forest interspersed with lakes, grassland, streams, hillocks and rivulets.

#### **IVg. Community Involvement from Planning to Implementation**

Innovative and promising rural tourism initiatives has been taken through the project like Endogenous Project (Rural Tourism) at Hodka (Kutch) by an NGO 'Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan'. In this regard, an incentive fund to encourage experimentation, replication and dissemination of experiences and practice has also been established. Recognizing the historic, current and potential importance of Gir Protected area the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and World Bank have identified it as one of the seven sites for eco-development project. The thrust of the eco-development project is improvement of protected area management and involvement of local people. It improves the capacity of protected area management to effectively conserve bio-diversity, involve local people in planning and protection, develops incentives for conservation and support sustainable alternatives to prevent harmful use of resources.

#### **IVh. Marketing Strategies**

The Tourism Policy (2003-2010) proposes to give a very special thrust to 'Event (Festival) Based Tourism' and market the events both within and outside the country and in the process brand Gujarat as the destination for tourism events like Navratri, Somnath festival, Dwarka festival, village olympics on very special type of sports that is unique to Gujarat, Tarnater fair, Kutch festival, Kite festival etc. To promote and showcase Gujarat Tourism, international fairs are being arranged in Gujarat.

The Tourism Policy envisages developing Gujarat Tourism by E-marketing. For this students of Gujarat will be encouraged to develop an interest for e-mail communication with the students and other persons abroad. To attract students

for these activities, scheme of 'E mail Fan Club of Gujarat' will be worked out. To give wide publicity and disseminate information on Gujarat Tourism and marketing of its products, the Tourism Corporation plan to open its offices in other major cities of India in addition to its existing offices in Bombay, Delhi and Madras.

#### **IVi. Tourism Promotion Literature and Publications**

Printing and distribution of high quality literature, posters, pamphlets, guide maps, which depict important tourist attractions in Gujarat, are widely circulated. Advertisements are also being given in dailies, magazines, etc. Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited is the key agency for information dissemination.

#### **IVj. Tourism Related Programs**

While other state governments made successful efforts in developing tourism within their states, Gujarat State is slow to harness and develop its full tourist potential. The point of ineffective marketing is quite conspicuous in the case of Gujarat as not many foreign tourists are aware of many of the important tourist products that the state has to offer. This aspect has been taken care of by the tourism policy of 2003 – 2010. The policy lays down special emphasis on "Event Based Tourism" and wooing tourists through organization of fairs and festivals in the state. International Fairs were organized to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the state. The strategy has been quite popular with the international visitors especially the NRGs (Non Resident Gujaratis). Total of 33 Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) involving an investment of 10,793 crore (USD 2.57 billion) were signed at 2007 Vibrant Gujarat Global Investor's Summit (VGGIS). Tourism sector registered an increase of 47 % over investments in 2005 VGGIS.

#### **V. Conclusion**

Gujarat has tourist flow for religion purpose and also for business purpose. The state can there for concentrate on providing infrastructure facilities in order to attract and promote tourism in the state. The state can also provide training facilities so that the local employment can increase in this sector. Tourism should be developed in order to maintain and preserve the local traditions and culture. By providing the local people with alternative source, eco-tourism would drastically reduce the biotic pressures in the region which would automatically lead to greater habitat improvement. Other habitat improvement work such as clearing weeds for making view lines, creating salt pits for wildlife etc. Would be mutually beneficial for both the forest and the eco-tourists. Gujarat has tribal belt that can we developed as eco-tourism centre. The Dangs

district of Gujarat has attracted tourist for the purpose of locating herbal medicinal plants. The government can develop this Dangs district as eco-tourism spot.

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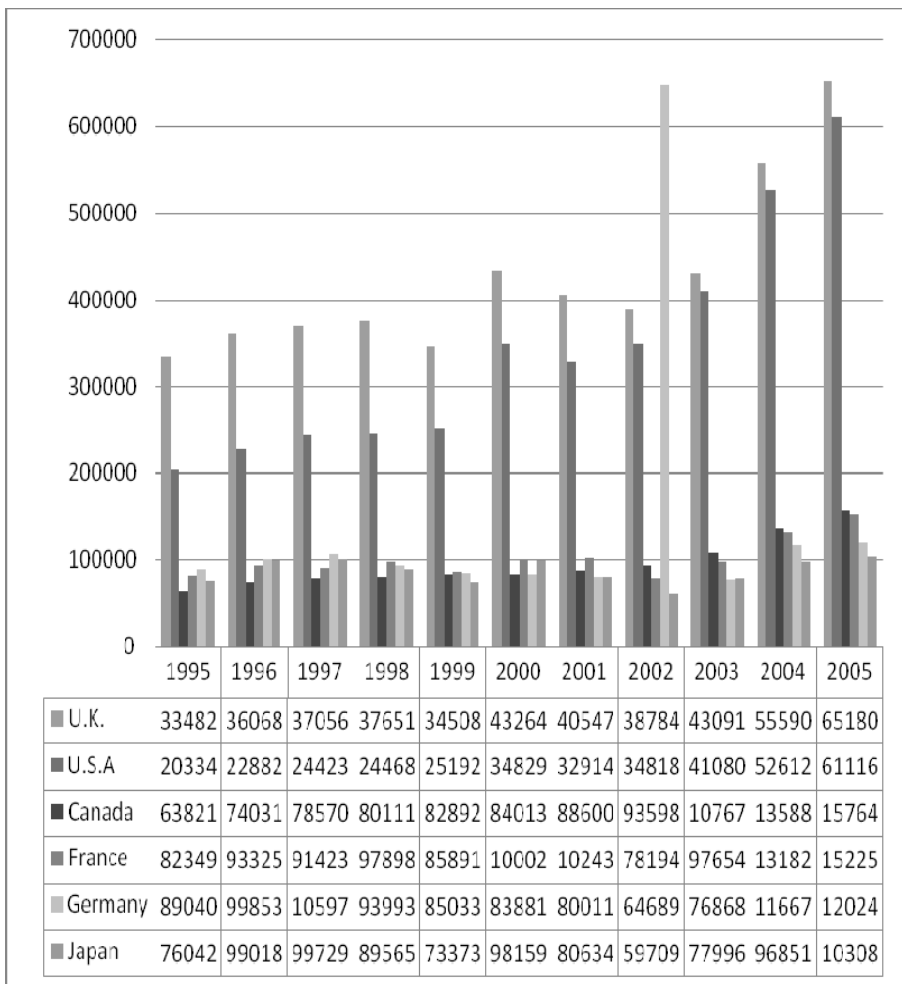
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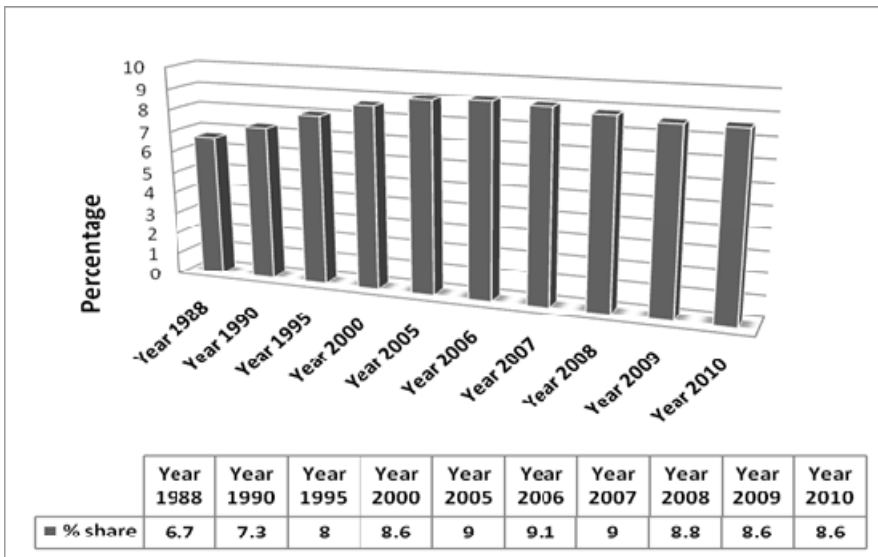
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**Charts and Tables**

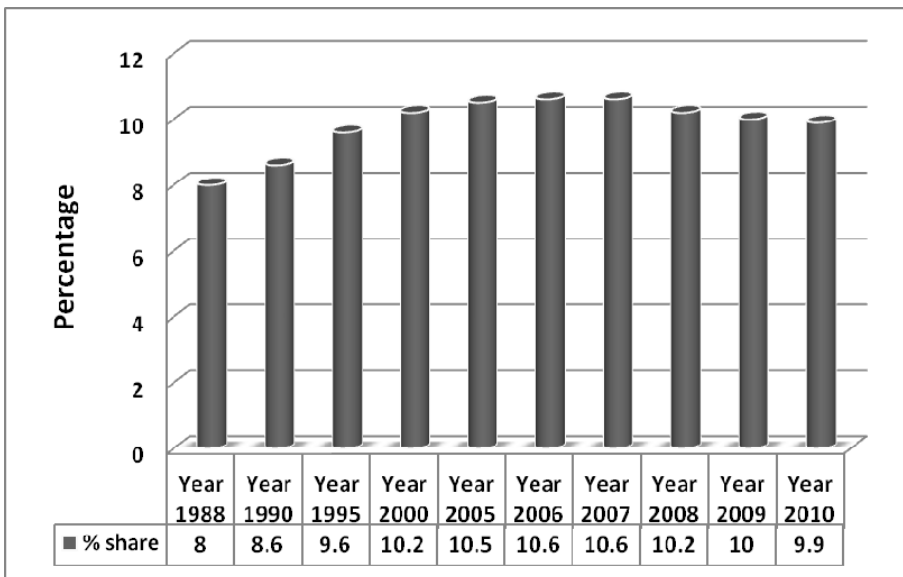
**Chart 1 Tourist Inflow in India from Major Developed as Well Developing Countries of the World**



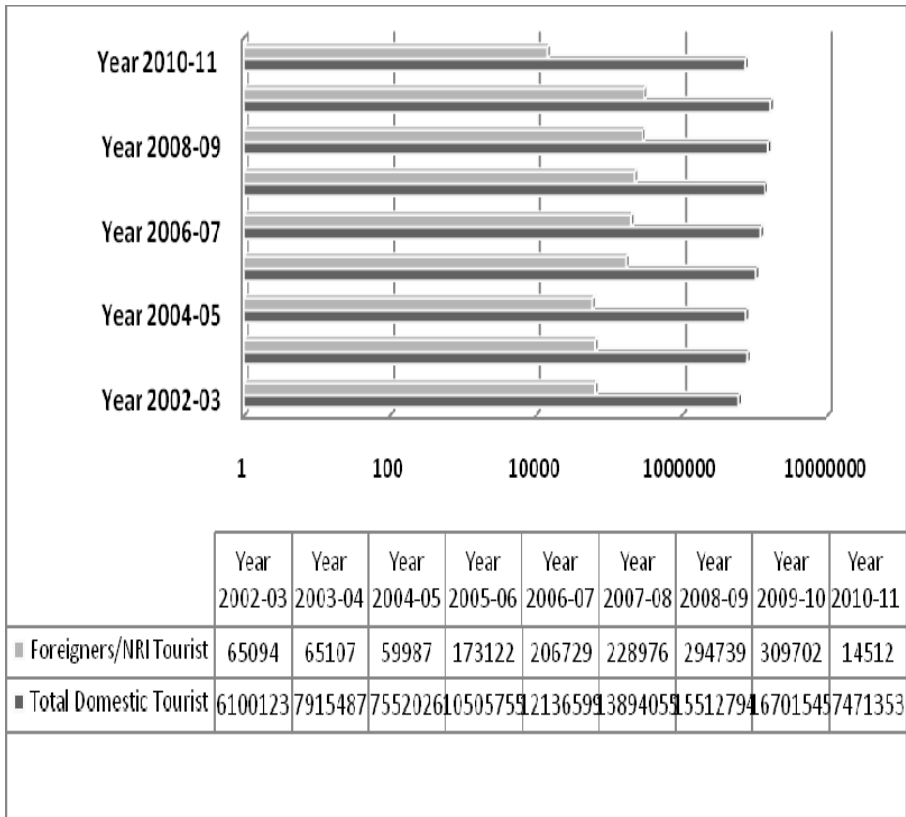
**Chart 2 Contribution of Tourism to GDP in Indian Economy (1988 to 2010) (in %)**



**Chart 3 Impact of Tourism on Employment in Indian Perspective (1988 to 2010) Share in %**



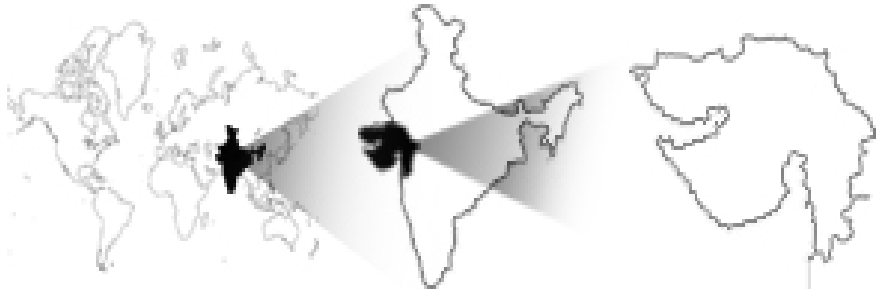
**Chart 4: Tourist Visited Gujarat During the Year 2002-03 to 2010-11**



**Table: 1 Foreign Tourist Arrival to India (In millions)**

Year	Arrivals	% Change
2002	2.38	(-) 6.0
2003	2.73	(+) 14.3
2004	3.46	(+) 26.8
2005	3.92	(+) 13.2
2006*	4.43	(+) 13.0
Growth in 5 years i.e., 2006 over 2001: 86%		
Source: Ministry of Tourism		

**Map: 1 Gujarat State of India in the World Map**



**Dr.Yogesh N Vansiya**, is presently working as Assistant Professor in the Mahadev Desai Gramseva Mahavidhyalay, Sadra affiliated to Gujarat Vidhyapith, Ahemadabad, Gujarat. His various research papers are published in many reputed national and international journals. Besides Dr. Vansiya is working as Joint editor in Vishleshan journal. He did many research projects, are sponsored by Gujarat Government and Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India. He has been actively involving in research activities, teaching and research in the diverse area of social science since last eleven years.



**Dr. Subadra Ragothaman** has retired recently as Professor and Head, in the Department of Economics, Veer Narmad South Gujarat University, Surat. She has vast research and long teaching experience in various fields of economics. Her specialization has been industrial economics and financial economics. She has guided a number of students for Ph.D. and M.Phil. degree. She has presented more than 25 papers at International, National and State level seminar and conferences and most of them are published in different journals.