

## FICCI-Yes Bank Recipe to Make India a 365-Day Tourism Destination

**NEW DELHI, April 14, 2011.** A FICCI-YES Bank study has outlined a 10-point road map to make India a 365-day tourism destination.

The study calls for strategically marketing alternative tourism products in various states of the country, availability of travel websites in foreign and native languages and online booking facilities, creating quality accommodation across all categories in all states, developing tourism circuits on a hub and spoke model, enhancing air connectivity, augmenting the existing road and rail infrastructure, increasing government spending on tourism infrastructure, infrastructure development through the PPP model, establishment of a tourism skills development council and proper collection and analysis of statistical data by state governments.

The following are the detailed suggestions made by the FICCI-YES Bank Study to make India a year-round tourism destination:

Strategically marketing alternative tourism products: The following states could develop alternative product to give a boost to tourism in their respective states. Jammu & Kashmir *snow festival, agri tourism* ; Uttaranchal *ecological tours, school training Camps*; Madhya Pradesh *educational tourism, caravan tourism*; Rajasthan *medical tourism, agri tourism*; Haryana *golf tourism, lake tourism*; Punjab *agri tourism, cultural tourism*; Gujarat *medical tourism, water tourism*; Bihar *cultural tourism, agri tourism*; Jharkhand *tribal tourism, health tourism*; West Bengal *festival tourism, mango tourism*; Andhra Pradesh *port tourism, tribal tourism*; Tamil Nadu *rural tourism, cultural tourism*; Kerala *cultural tourism, wellness tourism*; Karnataka *shopping festival, caravan tourism*; Orissa *tribal tourism, turtle tourism*; Uttar Pradesh *agri tourism, cultural tourism*; Himachal Pradesh *snow tourism*; Goa *bird watching, monsoon tourism and Delhi casino tourism*;

**ICT Initiatives:** There is need for provisions such as availability for the website in different international languages, availability of the website in the native language, travel bookings online and virtual 360 tours on the websites can enable greater tourism flows.

**Hotel Infrastructure:** In the coming years, the travel and tourism industry in the country will be shaped by the requirements and aspirations of the growing middle class. Thus there is an urgent need to address the issue of creating good quality accommodation not only in the five star categories but across all categories and across all states. Concepts like Bed and Breakfast Scheme put in place in some states like Tamil Nadu,

Andhra Pradesh need to be taken forward in all stages to allow budget travelers have an experience of the local flavors. Moreover, the state tourism department hotels not doing well should be leased to the private sector on a long term lease basis as has been done in Tamil Nadu and Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan is about to do the same.

**Enhancing Quality of Physical Infrastructure (Air connectivity) to attract greater international tourists:** Some states like Kerala which have great tourism potential but limited international connectivity can witness a major upsurge in international tourists if the international connectivity is improved to cover other locations. Another important destination which needs to have improved international air connectivity is Guwahati, which is already an international airport and connected only to Bangkok, to the neighboring countries such as China in the north, Bangladesh, in the south-west, Bhutan in the north-west and Myanmar in the east, expanding its presence as hub for international trade, commerce and tourism. Further, development of central India particularly Madhya Pradesh and Chhatisgarh requires the presence of an international airport at Bhopal to develop Central India as a tourist hub.

Augmenting the existing road and railways infrastructure: Deficiencies in support facilities for each tourism product should be identified and addressed separately specifically for products such as eco and rural tourism, adventure tourism and heritage tourism where usually the final destination is away from the initial port of entry and boosting tourism in specific circuits will require good quality road infrastructure. Moreover, comprehensive road cum rail tours can also be initiated by the state governments. Another infrastructural development which can increase the attractiveness of North East as a tourism hub is the development of road infrastructure on the lines of the golden quadrilateral in the North East connecting all major states.

Increasing government spending on Tourism Infrastructure : The average trip travel spend by a tourist in India is almost 2.8 times the travel spend in Singapore, 4.5 times the travel spend in Malaysia and 6.5 times the travel spend in China and still the contribution of to travel and tourism GDP is less than of China and Malaysia and Singapore, Moreover, the Government's expenditure as a percentage of the total budget is the lowest in India as compared to its competitive neighbours despite the fact that the country is still developing its Tourism Infrastructure. Nations like Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore which have developed their tourism infrastructure to a great extent are still contributing a substantial amount in developing Tourism in their country.

Tourism Infrastructure development through public private partnership: There is great regional disparity in the development of tourism infrastructure through PPP. Most of the projects are concentrated in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka while few of them being concentrated in Orissa and Kerala and one project each in Punjab and Rajasthan. This

trend needs to be addressed to have rapid development of tourism infrastructure in the country especially in the regions which are lagging behind in terms of tourism development in the country.

Enhancing the productivity of the workforce employed in this sector: According to the Indian Hotel Survey (2009-09), Indian Hotels continue to remain inefficient in their manpower utilization. The all India average of total employee ratio to hotel room stands at 1.6 much higher than what is observed in hotels across the globe. The government has already initiated several measures to improve the productivity of the existing labor force. However, what is required is a unique partnership between industry, academia and government which can happen through the establishment of Sector Skills Council.

Proper data collection of statistical information is necessary for the states to relook into their tourism policy and future steps that need to be taken to promote tourism industry. Two states Maharashtra and Chattisgarh do not collect statistics on monthly tourist inflow, and is a great hindrance for any tourism centric analysis. Apart from these primary problems, quality of data also needs to be assured.

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