

2.27. Tourism

Tamil Nadu is a unique state from the tourism point of view. The immense tourist wealth of Tamil Nadu is one of the greatest assets of the State. Nature has bestowed Tamil Nadu with countless number of tourist spots such as hill stations, beaches, wild life sanctuaries, bird sanctuaries, zoological parks etc. The long and rich history of the Tamil language and society is marked by temples, pilgrim centres, historical and heritage monuments etc.

Tourism promotes national integration, tolerance and understanding of different cultures. It encourages preservation of monuments, heritage properties and eco-sanctuaries, helps survival of traditional art forms, crafts and culture. It has achieved rapid strides due to its capacity to earn foreign exchange, generate employment opportunities and inculcate a sense of heritage and fraternity in the minds of people. Tourism is the third highest foreign exchange earner for India.

Tamil Nadu registered a 11.68% growth in terms of foreign tourist arrivals in the year 2006 with the registered arrivals of 1.1 million tourists in the State as against 4.43 million arrivals with a growth of 13% in India. Foreign exchange earnings from tourism was Rs.3020 crore in Tamil Nadu achieving an increase of 18.2% in 2006 as against Rs.29,604 crore with an increase of 17.6% for India.

The state has been vigorously pursuing a three pronged strategy of attracting more tourists to Tamil Nadu, making them stay for a longer period in the State, and providing them with world class infrastructure facilities in order to boost the tourism sector.

The Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation (TTDC) has been promoting tourism in Tamil Nadu by building up adequate tourism related infrastructure facilities on commercial basis. Besides owning the largest chain of 55 hotels in South India, the TTDC also provides facilities such as youth hostels, restaurants, boathouses and

other tourist attractions covering all the major tourist destinations in the State.

Goals & Targets

- To make Tamil Nadu the top destination in India for attracting domestic and foreign tourists
- To increase the number of tourist arrivals from 446.05 lakhs in 2007 to 718.36 lakhs at rate of 10% by the end of Eleventh Plan.
- To increase the length of stay of tourists in the State
- To increase the average spending by foreign as well as domestic tourists per day.

Strategies

The following strategies are being adopted to achieve the objectives of the Plan-

1. Conducting Publicity campaigns in all major cities in India and abroad and participating in the International Travel Marts
2. Developing major destinations to the level of international standards for attracting foreign tourists.
3. Developing less known tourism places, minor waterfalls and dam sites to attract both domestic and foreign tourists.
4. Publicizing and Marketing festivals like Pongal, Natyanjali etc.
5. Developing pilgrim centres by providing infrastructure facilities
6. Opening of Tourist offices at various State capitals and important cities in India
7. Encouraging participation of private sector, corporate sector, oil companies for increasing certain tourist infrastructure facilities like Golf, Adventure Tourism, Cruises, Star Hotels, Resorts, Charter tours, Group tours, Heli-taxi etc
8. Ensuring preservation of heritage monuments, monuments, arts and crafts to keep the tradition of culture tourism alive.

Programmes

Promotion & Marketing

It is proposed to continue Publicity and Marketing in a more aggressive and focused manner during the Plan period. The brand slogan "*Enchanting Tamil Nadu - Experience Yourself*" will be given wide publicity in domestic and international media.

Massive Publicity through Electronic / Print Media would be undertaken through release of advertisements in the national and international travel magazines, dailies, satellite TV channels, FM radio as well as printing of folders / posters for wider circulation etc. For effective marketing and publicity, familiarization tours for tour operators, travel writers and tourist crew from India and abroad will be conducted periodically. An expenditure of Rs.15.00 crore was incurred for Promotion and Publicity during 2007-08 and an outlay of Rs.19.00 crore is proposed for Annual Plan 2008-09.

Fairs & Festivals

Tamil Nadu is well known for its rich cultural heritage both within and outside the country. Music, Dance and Drama form an integral part of the lives of people in the State.

It is proposed to popularize and fully exploit the tourist potential available in fairs and festivals particularly the Pongal Festival, Natyanjali Festival and Bhagavata Mela Utsav at Melattur in Thanjavur District, both in the domestic and international tourism market.

Development of Infrastructure

The schemes such as Destination Development, Circuit Development, District Excursion Centres, Development of minor Waterfalls, Development of Dam Sites, Pilgrim Tourism, Heritage Tourism, Rural Tourism, Farm Tourism, Medical Tourism Eco-Tourism Adventure Tourism, Promotion of Museums Guide Training are proposed will be implemented during the Annual Plan 2008-09. An expenditure of Rs.14.06 crore was incurred for development of

infrastructure facilities in 2007-08 and the same outlay of Rs.14.06 crore is proposed for 2008-09.

Plan Outlay for 2008-09

The outlay for State sector during the Eleventh Plan is Rs.174.95 crore including schemes for provision of basic facilities, amenities and infrastructure in tourist centres and to provide the matching grant for Centrally sponsored schemes. An outlay of Rs. 40.85 crore is approved for Annual Plan 2008-09 to implement various schemes in Tourism sector.