



SPORTS TOURISM IN INDIA: A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr. Jaswant Saini

Assistant Professor, Department of Law, M.D.U- Rohtak
onscorporate@rediffmail.com

INTRODUCTION

World tourism arrivals are projected to grow at 4.3 percent per year and to reach 1.6 billion by 2020. In the same period, worldwide tourist spending is expected to grow at 6.7 percent per year and to reach US \$2 trillion¹. One of the fastest growing areas contributing to these staggering statistics is sport tourism.

“Although sport tourism is a relatively new concept in terms of contemporary valuable, its scope of activity is far from a recent incident. The notion of people traveling to participate and watch sport dates back to the ancient Olympic Games, and the practice of inspiring tourism through sport has existed for over a century. Within the past five years, however, sport and tourism professionals have begun to realize the significant potential of sport tourism and are aggressively pursuing this market gap.”

DEFINING SPORTS TOURISM

The term ‘Sports Tourism’ basically means tourism that is based on the theme of sports. It refers to a specific travel outside the usual environment for either passive or active involvement in competitive sport. Sport is the primary reason for travel whereas the leisure element may reinforce the overall experience. Another school of thought explains it as a combination of sports activities and travel wherein it consists of two broad categories².

1. *Active Sports Tourism* i.e. Travel for the purpose of participating in a sport, leisure or enjoyable activity.
2. *Passive Sports Tourism* i.e. Travel for the purpose of visiting a sport, leisure or recreational activity or an event.

“Sports tourism is a pretty popular phenomenon in areas such as North America, Australia and Europe. Sport tourism is a fast growing sector of the global travel industry and equates to \$600 Billion a year. It has been given sub sectored into notable products such as Golf Tourism, Polo Tourism and Adventure Tourism through various activities”.

ECONOMIC FORCES THAT DRIVE SPORT TOURISM

Mega and small scale sport tourism has the potential to contribute to the social, cultural, economic and infrastructural development of the host country or city. Sport tourism involves the travel of persons for non-business reasons to participate and or observe sporting activities (Hall, 1992).

Mega sporting events include the hosting of World Cups for such sports such as football, cricket, and rugby. Small scale sporting events include triathlons, marathons and a leg of the formula one grand prix.

According to Zauhar (2003),

“Sport tourism involves a number of activities. In addition to either participating and or observing sporting events, persons who travel for sport tourism may also have a vested interest in visiting state of the art sporting facilities such as stadiums.”

These may include for example, Lords cricket ground in England, Roland Garros in Paris, Maracana Stadium in Brazil and the Millennium rugby stadium in Wales. In addition to the iconic sporting stadiums appeal, sport tourists may also show an interest in sporting hall of fames and sport museums such as the Legends of Barbados cricket museum.

¹ As per report of World Trade Organization, published in the year of 2001.

² “Report on Tourism in India: *an exploratory study*” by Liu Shujin, Director, Cnto, New Delhi.



“Sport tourists may not always be interested in traditional competitive sports and may find adventurous activities far more inviting and appealing to their leisure taste. Some of these adventurous activities may include bungee jumping stations, zip line canopy tours, hiking trails, water adventures such as snorkeling and golf. Sport tourism offers several economic benefits to local communities, the region and or the country. An estimated 680,000 persons from overseas attended the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics. These visitors generated enormous economic activity through different forms of expenditure on sporting and non-sporting activities. There was an increased demand for various forms of accommodation—hotels and guest houses.”

Similarly there was an increase in demand for sporting paraphernalia such as replica tee shirts, sneakers etc. Non-sporting products expenditure included food, beverages, phones, cameras, and other electronic accessories that are associated with travelers. According to Hassen (2003) the 2003 Cricket World generated 1.3 billion Rands for the South African economy.

“Sport tourism provides the host country with high media coverage. This coverage will cover not only the sporting event but also provide important information about the country’s cultural and entertainment locations as well as an overall country profile. Such information would have been provided when the Caribbean played host to two cricket world cups in 2007 and 2010 respectively. Additionally, Trinidad and Tobago would have benefitted from the media coverage when it hosted the 2001 FIFA U17 World Cup for boys and the 2010 FIFA World Cup for girls.”

Mega and small sporting events not only offer athletes and officials opportunities to establish strong social bonds but also allow sport tourists the opportunity to forge long lasting social connections with persons from host cities and countries. These bonds have the potential to result in future travels between countries and so deepening the benefits of tourism.

According to Morrison (2005) mega sporting events provide a platform to incorporate social and cultural features of the host community/city/country into the overall tourist experience. These events are good occasions to showcase the cultural heritage of the country such as its history, historical sites, food, music, art, architecture, and overall what makes the host unique and interesting to want to return in the immediate future.

“Sport tourism does not only result from the visiting and expenditure from tourists but also involves the development of local infrastructure such as stadia, hotels, transportation networks, roads, telecommunication, airports and other infrastructure. Such developments will provide long term benefits to communities where they have been established. The potential benefits of sports tourism can only be realised if several challenges are overcome especially in the developing world. In countries where crime and matters of security are a major concern persons considering to travel to these destinations may be discouraged to engage in any form of sport tourism.”

Additionally, the allegations of corruption and financial scandals may also serve as a discouragement. The overall success of any sporting tourism event is dependent upon management. Poor management due to financial impropriety, poor planning, lack of efficient customer service, and a host of other management’s drawbacks may serve as a major Achilles heel for the success of any sport tourism event.

Sports and tourism sectors have become a platform to perform economic activities since service activities are a major contributor to the national GDP in Malaysia. In the economic sector, service sector has contributed into 58.5% of total national GDP in 2006³ and expected to grow up to 70% of national GDP by 2015. As such, tourism sector alone has contributed 12.5% of the national GDP and generated RM103.3 billion in income from domestic and international related tourism activities in 2013. Sports events apparently have been recognized as the main contributor into the statistics due to F1 events, Motor GP, Monsoon Cup, professional golf tours, marathons and others. In implementing strategic policy in attracting more consumers, businessmen, entrepreneurs and even multinational companies to get involved in this niche market, the Malaysian government has introduced National Key Economic Area (NKEA) Tourism. This NKEA Tourism focuses on high yield tourism, driving economic and employment growth for nation.⁴ In this document, designated Targeting

³ (Bank Negara, 2007)

⁴ (Ibid, 2014).



International Events portfolio especially on international sport events has been addressed as one of the Entry Point Projects (EPP).⁵

According to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon (2011),

“Sport tourism has the potential to being powerful tool for development and progress. However, for this to be accomplished to reap the benefits of sports tourism proper planning and management of events have to be undertaken.”

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS THAT INFLUENCE POPULARITY OF SPORTS TOURISM

Equally important in making it possible for sport tourism to expand to a more extensive cross section of the population are the recent innovations in technology. The best example of this new technology is illustrated by new methods in transportation. With the invention of automobiles and air travel in the past century, individuals have been able to move to various locations to take part in these sport tourism activities.

Furthermore, with the creation of these new transportation methods, people began to require accommodations away from their homes. This led to the massive development of numerous hotels, inns, and motels. In addition to the crucial role that transportation and accommodation played in the increased popularity of sport tourism, new innovations in media technology also aided in the development. The press followed by radio and then television popularized spectator sport in particular. Lastly, the innovations in sport equipment production have also contributed to the development and the popularizing of sport.

“Because of the wide range in technological innovations, the opening of travel and appeal of sport has greatly increased, allowing for the rapid expansion of sport tourism. More specifically, increased access, expanded availability, and ease of participation have contributed to the increased rise in popularity of sport tourism.”

SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACTS OF SPORTS TOURISM

Sport tourism inevitably affects more than the economy; tourists by their presence impact on the host population and, at least in some regards, hosts have an effect on their visitors. The trend to increase sport touristic experiences and to provide them in far away, often very different cultures simply increases the importance of addressing both the potential positive and the negative socio-cultural impacts of sport tourism.

Positive Impacts of Sport Tourism on Culture

- Sport tourism can strengthen national heritage, identity, and community spirit as local people join together to promote their culture.
- Sport tourism can provide a vehicle through which visitors can come to know foreign people and their culture.
- Sport tourism can instigate the regeneration and preservation of cultural traditions.

General Benefits of Sport Tourism

- Sports are an investment in the tourism industry.
- Creates economic growth through filled hotels, restaurants and retail establishments.
- Creates exposure and enhances a positive image for your community.
- Creates new product, a new tourism destination.
- Maximizes facility use in your community.
- Builds community relationships and strengthens corporate support.
- Creates youth opportunity/entertainment.
- Attract high-yield visitors, especially repeaters.
- Generate favorable image for the destination.
- Develop new infrastructure.
- Use the media to extend the normal publicity.

⁵ (Ibid, 2014)



- Generate increased rate of tourism growth or a higher demand elevation.
- Improve the organizational, marketing, and bidding capability of the community.
- Secure a financial legacy for management of new sport facilities.
- Increase community support for sport and sport-events.

CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS TOURISM

There are several classifications on sport tourism. One of the theories suggested that the sports tourism is defined as Hard Sports Tourism and Soft Sports Tourism while another theory suggested that there are three types of sports tourism which includes Sports Event Tourism, Celebrity and Nostalgia Sport Tourism and Active Sport Tourism

Hard and Soft Sport Tourism: “Hard definition of sport tourism refers to the quantity of people participating at competitive sport events. Normally these kinds of events are the motivation that attracts visitors visits the events. Olympic Games, FIFA World Cup, F1 Grand Prix and regional events such as NASCAR Sprint Cup Series could be described as Hard Sports Tourism.

Soft definition is relatively the tourists travel for participating on recreational sporting, or signing up for leisure interests. Hiking, Skiing and Canoeing can be described as the Soft Sports Tourism.”

Sport Events Tourism: Sport event tourism refers to the visitors who visit the city with the purpose of watching the events. A good example of this would be during the Olympics. Each Olympic host city receives an immense amount of tourism.

Nostalgia sport tourism : Nostalgia sport tourism involves traveling to famous sport-related attractions. Visits to various sporting hall of fames such as the Women’s College Basketball Hall of Fame in Knoxville, Tennessee and the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, New York are good examples of these sport-related establishments. Furthermore, sports museums such as the NASCAR museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, and famous sport venues such as Lambeau Field in Green Bay, Wisconsin fall into this category.

Active sport tourism: Those individuals who travel to participate in sporting events comprise the active sport tourism category. These participatory events can take on a wide variety of forms in a wide variety of sports. Golf, kayaking, tennis, fishing, snowmobiling and surfing are just a few examples of the sports that people travel to participate in.

SPORTS TOURISM IN INDIA

Sports tourism in India has scored a high place for its self in Indian tourism industry. Sports tourism is broadly define by the adventure sports and game in India. There are indeed several destination in India offering sports tourism. There are varied sports activity that you can indulge during your vacation. Types of adventure sports Distinguished adventure sports: mountaineering, rock-climbing, scuba diving, water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, surfing, water scooting. Aero sports like: ballooning, paragliding, hand gliding. These sports offers scope for sports lover and enthusiasts from all of the world. Adventure hot sports in India Goa, Andaman and Nicobar, Kerala, Uttranchal, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Assam, Sikkim, Lakshadweep.

“Business and leisure Business tour combined with active sports are becoming highly popular where business meets leisure and such kind of sports tourism on business tour is global cooperate strategy for employee entertainment and well being. Moreover sports tourism is nurture by professional sports person they have to travel extensively for there carrier to participate in national and international championship like Cricket World Cup, Soccer World Cup, Wimbledon so on and forth. Commonwealth Games 2010, Delhi is the best example of sports tourism.

Future of sports tourism Scope and future of sports tourism is endless in India because of its diverse topography and climatic condition. You can enjoy on land and water, under water and in air whatsoever form of adventure sports in India. Future of sports tourism and adventure sports in India is very bright.”



GLIMPSE OF PAST ACTIVITIES IN INDIA

Over a span of 5 years i.e. 2008 – 2013, India has witnessed 8 major sports events, viz a viz the following⁶.

| YEAR | EVENTS |
|------|---|
| 2008 | AFC Challenge Cup – New Delhi |
| 2008 | Commonwealth Youth Games – Pune |
| 2010 | Commonwealth Games – New Delhi |
| 2010 | Field Hockey World Cup – New Delhi |
| 2011 | Cricket World Cup (Men's) – Multiple Cities |
| 2011 | Formula One – Motor Sports – Greater Noida |
| 2011 | South Asian Winter Games – Dehradun, Auli |
| 2013 | Cricket World Cup (Women's) – Multiple Cities |

THE CURRENT SCENARIO

a. Inbound Sports Tourism in India

Sports tourism is broadly define by the adventure sports and game in India. There are indeed several destinations in India offering sports tourism. There are varied sports activities that one can indulge during their vacation.

Types of adventure sports: Distinguished adventure sports: mountaineering, rock-climbing, scuba diving, water rafting, kayaking, canoeing, sailing, surfing, water scooting. Aero sports like: ballooning, paragliding, hand gliding. These sports offer scope for sports lover and enthusiasts from the entire world.⁷

b. Outbound Sports Tourism in India

Respectively, there has also been a marked rise in the number of tour operators and agents specializing in servicing the requirements of this particular segment. It's not only slot specialists, but also big mainstream tour operators who set up a separate division to tap the potential of Sports Tourism. An alien concept in India about a decade ago, Sports Tourism, though a niche segment has evolved rapidly over the past five years. A large number of agents and tour operators are introducing interesting packages surrounding major sporting events. Sports Tourism is a well organised sector and major revenue earner in several nations around the world like UK, Germany, Singapore, South Africa, Malaysia etc. Several National Tourist Offices are aggressively working towards promoting their destinations for Sport Tourism in India to tap the corporate, as well as fast growing upper middle class and the youth.

CONCLUSION

Although Sports Tourism is a slot segment in India, it is growing rapidly, with a large number of entrepreneurs willing to invest in it. In order to support their efforts, the government needs to arrange an overall sprucing of infrastructure management, security issues and marketing strategies. The travel operators themselves feel the need to introduce more value-added services so as to attract international tourists to India.

“At the time of hosting the international sports in New Delhi's developed infrastructure and transportation. The Indian government has always given it a top priority while hosting sporting events like the two Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. However, sport event organisers and state tourism boards in India should be ready to invest in other metro cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kolkata.”

With booming interest among Indian sports participant to explore their interests in different sport fields, and various across the world encouraging tie-ups with Indian tour operators, there is sufficient fodder for India to established as a Sport Tourism destination and boost overall tourism in the country. It only needs to be utilised efficiently in order to gain significant benefits.

⁶ The Hindu Daily English News Paper, 16th September, 2015.

⁷ Sports tourism and adventure sports in India” article wrote by Dr. Ashwani Saini, Scholar of Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India



Indexed with IJIF
Impact Factor : 1.021
ISSN: 2456 - 608X

International Journal of Legal Research and Studies

An UGC Approved Online Law Journal

In short, it is hoped that the outcome of this research will later contribute into the findings of the best strategies in promoting sports tourism and will become a point of reference for future research. The variables constructed in the study are appropriate variables that hopefully can be used as strategic tools to attract more spectators to Malaysian international sport events in future.