

# The Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat Level in Tourism Relations between India and Saudi Arabia

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## Article Info

Volume 82

Page Number: 7742 - 7747

Publication Issue:

January-February 2020

## Article History

Article Received: 18 May 2019

Revised: 14 July 2019

Accepted: 22 December 2019

Publication: 04 February 2020

## Abstract:

Tourism is a temporary travel or movement of people from one place to another. It is a blend of social, cultural and economic characters paving the movement of people for a peripheral place. Mutual connection or cooperation among the countries with regard to tourism has resulted in an extensive bonding in all socio-economical facts and technological exchanges and ideas. The study involves in briefing and compiling the facts and facilities in enhancing the touristic relationship between India and Saudi Arabia. A SWOT analysis was conducted in order to help the Indian tourist to understand in brief about Saudi Arabia in making it as the well-liked destination to visit. Methodology was fully depending upon the primary and secondary data and the possible recommendations has been given out in order to build the relationship between these two countries with special reference to tourism

**Keywords:** SWOT analysis, economic characters, Tourism.

## I. Introduction

Tourism has now grown to such dimensions and importance that it has become the largest industry in the world. The tourism industry is the third highest foreign exchange earner in India. This remarkable growth is not due to any particular phenomenon, but only the result of the evolutionary process.<sup>1</sup> In the world of change one thing which has been constant development and growth both in terms of an industry and as an activity has been the tourism industry. Tourism is defined as a temporary movement of people to an outside place.<sup>2</sup> McIntosh and Goeldner(1984) have said that the real meaning of tourism and tourist come only by considering four dimensions which are the tourists, the service providers,

government and the host community or the local people.<sup>3</sup>

The pull factors for tourist to travel are the attractions, amenities, accessibility to destinations, positive marketing of the place, local governance, government policies, social, economical or cultural importance, exploring world etc<sup>4</sup> Tourism been considered as a throttle for growth in terms of world economy has been given much more importance by the local government the macro level operating organizations. And tourism studies also helps in exploration of differences of being a tourist and doing tourism helps in identification of key issues like globalization and modernity. And acts as a theory for preparation of policy making at both International and Domestic level.<sup>5</sup>

UNWTO statistics state that it projects a growth of 1.4 million international tourist arrival worldwide by 2020 and 1.8 million by 2030. Region wise growth is expected at an increase of 331 million arrivals in Asia are forecast to 535 million in 2030.<sup>6</sup>

As per the reports published by the World Travel and Tourism council gives a brief about the 2019 impacts of tourism and highlights the contribution of sector towards the world economy the as per the reports tourism sector contributed 10.4% Travel and tourism as a percentage of global Gross domestic product with 3.9% of direct Travel and tourism GDP growth in 2018.<sup>7</sup> It was also recorded that 319 million jobs are supported by the Travel and tourism which results 10% of the global employment. With 1/5 of all global net jobs created over last five years, Domestic tourism represented 71.2% of all tourism spending in 2018 which made a strong growth impact upon the developing nations which constantly supports the development of national pride and regional economic benefits. The top five countries which made collective markets towards the GDP are USA, China, Japan, Germany, and United Kingdom.<sup>8</sup>

## II. Objectives of the Study

This study is to understand the tourism potential between India and Saudi Arabia and to understand the current relationships between these countries with reference to Tourism and to know in detail about the tourism policies, products, Perception, Push and Pull factors, practices and other sectors subjected to tourism, within these two countries.

- To understand the current tourism relationship status of Indian and Saudi Arabia
- To explore the tourism destinations in Saudi Arabia
- To perform SWOT analysis for Indians wishing to visit Saudi Arabia

- To suggest the measures to improve tourism relationships.

## III. Methodology

The study is a quantitative, qualitative and explorative research. The data collected for the study constitutes both primary and secondary. The primary data are from the academicians, tourists, tourist representatives, administrators, agencies upon their observation and analysis with regard to the tourism between Saudi Arabia and India. The secondary data are from the international and national journals, reports from tourism bodies, books, journals magazines and governmental publications.

### Touristic Information about India:

As per the Tourism statistics released by the Ministry of tourism India stats that following numbers

- In the year 2017 the total no of foreign tourist arrivals in India are 10.04(M) with an annual growth of 14.0% and in the year 2018 the number is 5.16(M) for the period of Jan-June. Source: Bureau of Immigration-India
- The number of domestic tourist visits are 1652.49 (M) at an annual growth rate of 2.3%
- As per the Foreign exchange prepared by the Mot in the year 2018 for the period of Jan-Nov 175423 crore at a 10.7% of change over when compared to the previous year. This is 2017. For the year 2018 the GDP generated by tourism sector is 9.2% that means Rs 16.91 crore<sup>9</sup>
- The tourism sector contribution for the GDP is expected to increase from Rs 15.24 trillion in 2017 to Rs 32.05 trillion in coming year of 2028. As per the report presented by the Indian brand equity foundation. India is also ranked in the 7<sup>th</sup>

in terms of GDP generation when compared to 184 countries.<sup>10</sup>

#### Profile of Saudi Arabia:

Saudi Arabia the largest landscape among the states in the Middle East constitutes arid deserts and lowland mountains. The country's location is specific as it is located along the Red sea coast Persian Gulf coast being surrounded by three seas and seven countries; it is popularly referred as the nation with two holy mosques, located in Al-Medina and Mecca.<sup>11</sup>

In Saudi Arabia tourism takes the second position in source of income next to oil business. Though the tourism in Saudi Arabia still revolves around the pilgrimage forms of tourism there is also a growth in the leisure tourism.<sup>12</sup> Saudi Arabia was initially not much attracted by the international tourist due to the socio-economic and political reason beside now it has been overcome and it has been ranked 19th position among the most visited countries in the world.<sup>13</sup> The country attracts the tourist nationally and internationally with natural attractions like the green valleys, mountains, deserts, cultural, heritage and archaeological sites that includes Jabal Umm Sinman, Al Ahsa Oasis and Al Balad.<sup>14</sup>

#### Touristic Promotional Activities:

Saudi Arabia the rich kingdom with all essentials for domestic and international tourism is undergoing effective transformations like relaxation of immigration rules, improving the infrastructural needs and framing initiative policies for the development of tourism. The country has been investing about USD \$ 54 billion by 2030 to develop into an attractive tourist destination.<sup>15</sup> The country promotes private investments through Kafalah Program guaranteeing tourism projects to receive loan facilities upto 400 million US dollars.<sup>16</sup>

The infrastructure of the nation is recently getting developed like opening new international airport at Jeddah handling about 200 million passengers. Saudi Arabia started issuing tourist visa for the citizens from 49 countries that includes nations like United Kingdom, China, United States of America, India and to open the potentiality of tourism. The visa issued under the category Single entry visa is valid for a month beside multiple entry visas is valid for about three months which can be availed online or on arriving with a nominal fee for the opened 49 country's citizens<sup>17</sup>

The government of Saudi Arabia is promoting many projects like developing their cities like Neom, a mega city at Tabuk, Qiddiya Entertainment City, King Abdullah Economic City, Amaala, Al Faisaliah City, to facilitate the leisure travellers and pilgrimage tourist visiting the holy places and UNESCO world heritages to expand and establish their tourism sector.<sup>18</sup>

The Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage (SCTH) has developed many programs and policies to strengthen the tourism sectors. The commission actively creates awareness and popularizes the touristic destinations of the country besides it also established General Authority for Entertainment (GAE) in 2016 to initiate the entertainment related activities for the inbound and outbound tourist.<sup>19</sup> The Project SouqOkaz city in Taif has been initiated with an investment of 2 billion US dollars to promote the heritage tourism promoting the heritage centres, recreation centres and museums.<sup>20</sup>

The country is surrounded at three sides by seas henceforth the coastal regions are being developed to promote the water front activities to attract the tourists, About 84 coral island in Red sea are organized to develop a marine sanctuary framing an eco-tourism destination.<sup>21</sup>

#### **IV. Bilateral Relationship between India and Saudi Arabia:**

Saudi Arabia and India have centuries old relationship socially, culturally and economically; The Nation's Prime Heads visit between the countries have improved the cordial relationships. Signing and participation of policies and declaration like Delhi Declaration, Strategic Partnership, Riyadh Declaration and recent announcement by the Kingdom like the Investment of 100 billion US dollars in India, increase in Hajj quota and inclusion of India in "Vision2030" has enriched the bilateral relationship between the nations. In Saudi Arabia the expatriate Indian population was about 1.54 billion in 2017-18 which has been raised to 2.6 billion on August 2019, Indian expatriate population stands second in position next to Syrians. India has planned to invest in the many entertainment sectors like cinema, building up an amusement park at Riyadh and developing the coral coastal line along the Red Sea.<sup>22</sup>

There exist a tight bond of relationship in import and exports among the two nations. Saudi Arabia is one among the largest market for Indian exports and ranks the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source for import. With regard to Saudi Arabia, India acts as the 7<sup>th</sup> largest source for its import and 4<sup>th</sup> largest market for its export. India participated as the guest of Honor in Saudi Arabia's National Heritage and Cultural festival Janadriyah 2018 and honored the festival. Many MoU's were signed between India and Saudi Arabia in development of Infrastructure and heritage tourism during the prince visit to India in February 2019. Hereby there exist a neat and professional bond between the countries promoting their travel and tourism.

## V. SWOT Analysis for Tourism from India to Saudi Arabia

### Strength

- The country's Cultural attractiveness and the main pilgrimage spots Great Mosque of Mecca, Arabic al-Masjid al-Haram

attracts many religious and non religious visitors.

- Cultural wealth: The great royal, historic culture and heritage value of the nation.
- The improvement and development in the infrastructure facilities have improved the access to the tourism sites.
- The country is known for its Discipline.
- Accessibility and accommodation facilities and well developed cities.
- Travellers seeking for undiscovered and unseen destinations in the kingdom.
- Demography of Indians society in Saudi Arabia
- History of the two nation's relationship for centuries.
- A positive hold and relationship between the countries.

### Weakness

- A short average time of foreign stay
- Seasonality and Climate adaptability
- Strict rules and regulations for foreign tourist.
- Marketed for pilgrimage than leisure travel.
- Unknown tourist place when compared to other European tourist destinations

### Opportunities

- A diversified tourism packages can be formulated by the tour operators as there exist a diverse in attractions for leisure or pilgrimage tourism.
- The tourism is in a initial stage of development hence the marketing for those attractions is more valuable.
- Potential tourism marketing
- Cultural tourism potential
- Changes and development in information and technology.



- Nations financial support for the tourism sectors and the tourist to travel.
- Infrastructure and accessibility improvement from India

#### Threats

- Insufficient marketing and knowledge for tourist regarding the leisure tourism attraction than the pilgrimage attractions.
- Religious restrictions.
- People perception on Travelling to Saudi Arabia.
- Visa restrictions on touristic mobility

### VI. Conclusion

This comprehensive study is a effort done in order to understand the relations of India and Saudi Arabia which is one of the important area of tourism which is also subject various research and study in due course. SWOT analysis was conducted with the help of secondary data published and which were found to be reliable. This study focus mainly on areas like the destinations, Bi-Lateral relations and on motivate things which will help Indian to travel to Saudi Arabia.

### VII. Limitation of study:

It is possible to analyze the relations between India and Saudi Arabia in many different fields like social, cultural, politic and other forms. However this research has focused only on the Tourism relations.

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