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## DEVELOPING TOURISM AMIDST ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN AND TERROR ATTACKS

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### ABSTRACT

*Tourism as an important global activity is as old as human civilization. Its manifold influence on the functioning of economic systems needs no emphasis. However, tourism is affected by a wide range of variables. Global economic slowdown and growing terrorism stand out to be highly significant in the growth and sustenance of tourism both global as well as domestic. Travel industry as a whole is confronted by changing economic situation and outbreak of terror incidents. Tourists disposition towards travel and business strategies emerge as vital areas of concern for all stakeholders during such crises, as tourism is not just an economic activity alone but a tool to integrate people of various regions emotionally. Cutting edge research with clear cut objectives which could contribute to tourism industry and academics by addressing global economic slowdown and terrorism is the need of the hour. Accordingly, this paper attempts to examine impact of slowdown and terrorism on tourism and suggest methods to bail out the industry from the present state of turmoil.*

**Key words:** *Economic Slowdown; Innovative Business Models; conventional economic analysis*

### Introduction

*“The dynamics of changes in motivation, preferences and expenditure over time also requires investigation”*

— *Sinclair, M.T & Stabler, M*

Before the appearance of economic slowdown tourism was heralded as next big goldmine for Indian economy. Tourism also ranked as third largest foreign exchange earner, provided direct and indirect employment to people of all status in the society in general. Unfortunately global economic slowdown affected the morale of tourism service providers and terror attacks have shaken the confidence of the international tourist. As the magnitude of the problem was high, Government adopted various steps, the fruits of which are yet to be reaped.

Decline in economic activities and outbreak of terror incidents have turned the domestic tourism segment downwards. During peak seasons also rate of unoccupied rooms was found high. Especially after terror attack destination in general received more excursionist (an individual who makes a visit which does not involve overnight stay from their normal place of residence) than tourist (a visitor whose visit is for at least one night). (Author own observation while visiting various terror affected destination in India between 1990 and 2009). Increased operational costs, change in expenditure pattern globally, high inflation rates, reduction in saving proposition, forced challenges on stake holders to deal the situation with adequate care. Reduction in return on investment, increased interest on loan, decreasing financial institutions globally posed a new challenge and complex hurdles for investors in tourism sector.

Maintaining the competitiveness of India as a tourism destination has become a difficult task. Previous experiences exhibit that there is no single ideal model which can be put into practice to get rid of critical situation. Model which ignores country specific factor for tourism development during crises is unlikely to achieve objectives of overall tourism growth.

Out of box solution, risk taking, optimal utilization of resources available is the real need of the hour to put back tourism on track in India. When global economics faces slowdown only innovative business models can bring synergy once again.

## **Review of Literature**

Several authors have studied about economic slowdown and terrorism impact on tourism, but separately. Few studies are as follows

Krakover, S (2000) while focusing on the impact of terrorism on Israeli tourism found sharp decline in tourism demand when the terror incidents are highly severe.

Sonmez, S., and Graefe, A.R (1998) in their study found the destination will be ignored from the vital destination to visit if it is felt too risky. They also found safety and security plays a key role while taking decision to travel to new place.

Singh, A and Singh.R (2009) in their research found challenge posed by terrorism can only be surmounted through international action by global community instead of issuing travel advisories against the individual country.

Sinclair, M.T. and Stabler, M. (1997) has identified research and investigation of variables affecting tourism demand at that particular destination must be done to gain in depth knowledge regarding tourism demand. They also insist to understand dynamics of changes in motivation, preferences and expenditure to understand tourism demand further.

Glaesser, D (2004) suggest to adopt strategic methods to overcome crisis must prevent the outset of crisis or it must put an end to the crisis within short period of time Author also stress the importance of using suitable marketing strategies to deal the crisis arising in tourism industry effectively and in cost effective manner.

Masarrat, G and Varshney, A.K. (2009) in a study, "Terrorism Leads Tourism Crises a Case Study of Rajasthan", explored the negative impact of terrorism on tourism in the state of Rajasthan. They found tourist dislike to visit terror attacked destination and terror attack psychologically affect the tourist all over the world.

Brown, R and Junek, O. (2004) determined the impact of travel advisories of five English speaking countries, namely the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and Newzaland on tourism industries of LCD's in Asia. They found the inconsistencies, political motivation and economic power behind the issuance of travel advisories.

Mill and Morrison (1985) state that decisions made by individual are based on information received from the commercial and the social environment. They further state that commercial environment refers to information provided by tourism business organisation and destination countries whereas information received from friends, relatives and reference groups are classified under social environment

Pearce, P.L, Morrison, A, M. and Rutledge, J.L. (1998) apart from defining motivation also differentiated motivation for travel from that of destination choice. They explain that motivation for travel; help to understand the individual psychology of the traveler whereas destination choice describes the important features of a tourist destination that help in attracting travelers towards the destination.

Though there are plenty of studies on tourism demand during economic crisis and demand for tourism after terror attacks there is no study conducted to analyse how tourism demand will fluctuate after terror attack at destination especially at the time of global economic slowdown. Therefore this study is to identify challenges of Tourism Industry especially after terror attacks that too when economic slowdown is still continuing.

## **Rationale of The Study**

Currently due to global economic slowdown almost all countries have undergone major changes. Moreover recession is still continuing in global economic scenario and economists predict that emerging economies like India will face a tight situation in days to come. No doubt due to hard work and constant vigil of Indian Armed Forces and other security agencies number of terror incidents has reduced but the intensity of incidents has created a deep impacts in the minds of the people. It is in this context present study assumes special significance and relevance. Certain vital issues have been tried to be identified and highlighted in this paper which may be of immense importance to policy makers, researches, academicians and entrepreneurs engaged in tourism growth and development.

## **Objectives of The Study**

The main objective of the study is to

1. Identify challenges on Indian tourism industry due to global economic slowdown and terror attacks.
2. Evaluate ways to overcome such challenges.

## **Data and Methodology**

For analyzing the various relevant issues of global economic slowdown and terrorism this study has used relevant available data and information. Data have been collected from secondary sources of information only. Research papers published in various journals, books, reports and surveys and ideas of experts have largely contributed towards construction of this paper.

## **Shadow of Global Economic Slowdown and Terror Attack on Indian Tourism**

*“Tourism is an activity which is subject to rapid change as underlying conditions alters so that many of the issues which economists acknowledge and address are also issues in the analysis of tourism.”*

— Sinclair, M.T & Stabler, M

Global economic slowdown, rise in crude oil prices, weakening of US dollars against Indian rupee, crashing sensex, reduction in export earnings, cancellation of exports orders, rise in inflation and food product

rates are highly inter related to each other and when nation face such a uphill challenge unfortunately terror attacks at Mumbai at the beginning of peak tourism season added big blow to Indian hospitality sector. Two major hurdles appeared for Indian tourism industry they are

1. Fall in demand of tourism related products / services compared to other consumer / basic goods /services
2. Fear arises in the minds of people resulting in cancellation of their journey.

Various other reasons also caused hurdle but these two remain as major cause for concern

### ***Economic Slowdown and Fall in Demand of Tourism***

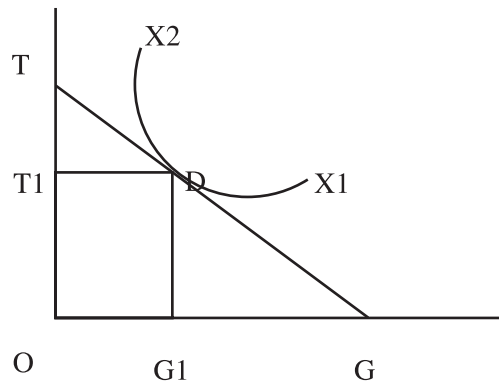
*“... a central feature of much tourism demand modeling is that some of the variables influencing consumer behavior have been ignored.”*

*— Sinclair, M.T & Stabler, M*

At times of economic slowdown the multiplier effect of tourism (the direct, indirect and induced effect) will be very low. This concept has to be well observed and understood as Indian economy is not export oriented one and tourism is one of the largest foreign export earner for Indian economy. During the normal time (healthy economic times) suppose a person has Rs 10,000 if provided with option to spend the amount either on tourism product / services or on basic consumer goods he may spend on a range of combination as shown in table 1. (This table was constructed for easy understanding of the figure No.1)

**Table 1**  
Expenditure Combination between Tourism and  
Basic Consumer Goods

On tourism In Rs	10,000	9000	8000	7000	6000	5000	4000	3000	2000	1000	0
On goods In Rs	0	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000	6000	7000	8000	9000	10,000

**Figure -1**

*Source: The economics of tourism, Sinclair. M.T and Stabler, M. 1997*

It is up to the individual to spend and the combination is given by the budget line slope TG in the figure. OT represent that individual has consumed Rs 10,000 on tourism alone, whereas OG represent Rs 10,000 was consumed for goods alone. Curve X1X2 represents level of satisfaction depending upon individual preferences of high tourism and low consumption or the vice-versa. Individual who have stronger preferences for tourism would consume a combination to the left of point D whereas individual who have stronger preferences for goods would consume a combination right of point D.

During normal times forecast is carried out, targets are fixed, investments are made, and marketing strategy are adopted and good rate of return on investment are expected. Economic slowdown in transforming economies like India will cast a deeper impacts that has to be closely monitored goods will become costlier than earlier, inflation will shoot up, purchasing power will be generally less and uncertainty will prevail in the local market. This will induce people to spend less on leisure / tourism activities and more on goods as prices of basic consumer goods rises rapidly.

Attracting individuals to spend on combination left of point D in the above figure will become a tedious task for tourism service providers during economic slowdown. Peculiar characters of tourism service / product also pose a challenging task to push product / service towards consumers both in short and long run.

Tremendous fall in demand of tourism products /services when compared to that of consumer / basic goods is visible during global economic

slowdown. Fall in rate of return on investment further dampens the spirit of investors further complicate the situation.

Tourism demand will be effective when it is backed by income, consumer's budget level. Pattern of tourism demand mainly depends upon distribution of income and wealth (Sinclair, M.T. and Stabler, M 1997). Understanding this concept is essential to gain in depth knowledge regarding tourism demand during economic crisis. When income level and wealth fall due to global economic slowdown demand for tourism products and services will fall. Complex structures of tourism generating and receiving markets require in depth analysis at times of such economic slowdown. Further fall in demand for tourism related product / services can appear with changes in employment level, liquidity constraints, purchasing power of people, saving propositions, investment pattern and consumption in society.

#### ***Terror Attacks and Fall in Tourism Demand***

*"...acts of terrorism have differential effects on tourism demand depending on such factors as the severity of the event and frequency of the occurrence."*

— Pizam, A and Fleischer, A

**Table 2**

Major terror incidents in India apart from Jammu and Kashmir and North Eastern regions since 2000

<b>Date</b>	<b>Incident and Place of Attack</b>
26-29 Nov 08	Multiple Terror Attacks at Mumbai
27 sep 2008	Bomb blast at Mehrauli market New Delhi
13 Sep 2008	Five Bomb Blast in New Delhi
26 Jul 2008	17 Bomb Blast in 10 Different Areas at Ahmedabad
25 July 2008	18 Low Intensity Blast at Bangalore
13 May 2008	08 Serial Bomb Blast at Jaipur
01 Jan 2008	Terror Attack at Rampur
23 Nov 2007	Bomb Blast at Varanasi, Faziabad, Lucknow
11 Oct 2007	Bomb Blast at Ajmer
25 Aug 2007	Twin Blast at Hyderabad
18 May 2007	Bomb Blast at Hyderabad
19 Feb 2007	2 Explosion in Train at Panipat

08 Sep 2006	03 Bomb Explosion at Malegaon
11 Jul 2006	07 Bomb Blast at Mumbai Local Trains
07 Mar 2006	03 Bomb Blast at Varanasi
28 Dec 2005	Gunman opened Fire at IISC Campus Bangalore
29 Oct 2005	05 Bomb Blast at Delhi
05 Jul 2005	Terrorist attempt to enter disputed Complex at Ayodhya
25 Aug 2003	Twin Blast at Mumbai
13 Mar 2003	Bomb Blast on Train at Mulund
24 Sep 2002	Terror Attack at Akshardham Temple Gandhinagar
22 Jan 2002	Attack on American Centre Kolkata
13 Dec 2001	Attack on Parliament
14 Aug 2001	Bomb Blast in Train at Gaziabad
25 Aug 2001	Bomb Explosion at Memnagar
14 Aug 2000	Bomb Explosion in Train Rauzabad

*Source: South Asia Terrorism Portal*

Terrorism activities affecting tourism business is generally considered as misperception even by intellectuals, unfortunately it is not true. Such thinking generally prevails because of lack of understanding or knowledge about terrorism strategy. In country like India reason for outbreak of terrorism activities differ widely from place to place. When situation seems to improve sleeper cells are activated by terrorist, intensity of such incidents creates a behavioural changes in minds of visitors forcing them to avoid visiting such destinations. Quite apart from the physical danger of persons who are not preselected targets being hurt, there is the unavoidable side-effect of widespread fear that others might be harmed ( Lunis,P. 1986). This particular point turns the situation unfavourable for tourism activities at destination that face terror attack recently or regularly. Viewing data in general exhibits that number of terror incidents has reduced considerably but the intensity is increasing as attacks are becoming more lethal than earlier. The tourist infrastructure, public transport and energy production and supply infrastructure have been among their favourite targets (Raman, B. 2006) implies the threat to tourism sector in days to come. Researchers often tend to calculate the economic loss after each attacks, while some researchers views it is an inhuman activity to calculate economic loss of terrorism as human loss in such attack is more valuable than economic losses. The measurement of the cost of deadly conflicts in terms of economies is not only problematic

but also dehumanizing (Mohsin, A. 2002) clearly indicates researchers must adopt ways to heal problem caused due to terrorism rather than calculating the economic losses due to terrorism

Tourism involves a wide range of activities and services where human touch is felt at each and every step. Terror attacks on soft target like tourism infrastructure affects the fabric of tourism industry beyond imagination than any other variable impeding tourism sector. Immediately after terror attacks destination faces a lot of cancellation resulting in overall fall for tourism demand. Tourist towards Kashmir valley has shown a persistent increase upto 1980's and flow of tourists decreased because of turmoil particularly in 1990's (Digest of Statistics 2007-08 Government of Jammu and Kashmir). Almost all the tourists left within two days of Kargil war (Chitkara, M.G, 2002). Several researchers' feels tourism demand is affected by severity and frequency of occurrence of terror attack (Pizam, A and Fleischer, A. 2002). Fall in demand for tourism related services and products can be very well established from the above lines. Various attacks at different places within India is shown in table 2 such attacks created both short and long term negative impacts on Indian tourism in general. Attracting visitors towards such destinations and making guest to spend on tourism and leisure related services and products will become a tedious task for all stake holders involved in tourism business. Expenses on combination left of point D (Figure-1) will be reduced considerably at destination where terror attacks take place. Social pressures and changes in social context can affect the pattern of tourism consumption (Sinclair, M.T and Stabler, M.1997). Instability occurred in tourism industries especially after terror attacks prevail over a long period of time. Uncertainty induced by terror attacks make situation volatile to create stability. Stability can be reestablished only in long run that too after a prolonged hard work by all stake holders involved. Even many developed nations that have acquired expertise in managing crises of greater intensities find it difficult to re establish tourism sector within short duration after terror attack.

Drastic changes are observed in travel pattern towards a terror affected destinations travelers behavioural changes results in fall of demand. Terrorism also affects our relationship with neighboring nations. As a result of terrorism we are unable to develop our region as a famous tourism hub though a lot of unique and potential destination having charm to attract visitors from all over the globe and year around are present in abundance.

Impact of terrorism on tourism is calculated within a comparative static framework however it will be useful to view further possible effects of terrorism activities in relation to tourists' behaviour pattern, their decision making trends, hosts morale, and stake holders' strategies. Degree of tourist concentration varies between destinations even within same region of a country after attacks. Much focused and in depth research is essential to avoid pitfalls in future.

Impact of terror attack depends upon distance (Sundaraman, 2009). When a terror attack happen at a destination less impact is observed within 200 Kms radius of that particular destination. Many people would like to visit that particular location where attack took place. Between 200 Kms to 500 Kms radius impact is somewhat mixed. Some people from this region may like to visit and some may not like to visit. Beyond 500 Kms radius maximum people would not like to visit such destination. Though this sort of impact may vanish after some time this remain as a main hurdle in developing or promoting tourism at such destination immediately after terror attack.(Author own observation when travelled towards Pune/ Mumbai after terror attack at Mumbai in 2008). When attack happen at one destination, segment where impact is high has to be identified and special marketing strategies must be implemented in that segments to attract tourist towards terror affected destination once again. Researcher must take care to calculate both long and short term impacts and must give clear cut policy implications to mitigate negative impact created by terrorism on tourism at that particular destination / region.

### **Growth Amidst Challenges**

*“A well-handled crisis should not be defined by mere survival, but by seizing opportunities to rebuild, educate and even to enhance”*

— Seymour, M and Moore, S

Economic slowdown and terror attacks no doubt influenced tourism activities in India. An intense effort, multi dimensional approach is the need of the hour. Silent monitoring or overreactions to events will never give any result. Greater flexibility in our thinking and approaches are required to face the challenges.

- (A) ***Focus on Issues than Generalizing Facts:*** people have been on the move since prehistoric times, travel has become easier than earlier. During economic slowdown and terror attacks tourism

activities become less than during normal times. Adequate care must be provided to ensure variables hampering tourism activities are vividly focused, in-depth research are carried out with country/region/ destination specific rather than studying tourism trend during crisis in general over a period of time. Destination specific issues must be focused by tourism researchers along with security analyst and service providers. Though all terror attack does not happen at famous tourism destinations, it may have a direct or indirect effect on tourist inflow towards that region/country.

**(B) Maintain Integrated Relationship Between All Stakeholders:** It is quite obvious that various businesses cater the need of tourism industry. Lack of understanding of strong linkages among various service providers at grass root level complicates the problems further. At times of economic slowdown and terror attacks all business operators involved in tourism sector must operate in close coordination rather than as a single business unit. Providing transportation facilities to shift tourist from terror attacked sites to safer places, evacuation of casualties for treatment, psychological counseling to those tourist who witnessed the terror attacks directly, establishing communication link with friends and relatives at other countries are the main areas where tourism stakeholders should concentrate and extend maximum help to each other at times of severe crisis.

**(C) Activate Cutting Edge Market Research:** A reason which is frequently cited as the main cause for fall in demand of tourism services especially during and immediately after crisis is lack of market research. Consumer behaviour changes rapidly and their needs at time of crisis will be entirely different from the one at normal times with increasing inflation, spending pattern will change which has to be observed. Only when market trend is monitored correctly planning can be done to restructure it in short period of time. Spending for research is not to be considered as waste as it is an investment for future development at times of economic slowdown. Tourism service providers must conduct extensive survey at destination where crisis have occurred earlier and identify the immediate need of customer. Identifying customer needs beforehand will help to prepare an alternate plan that can be adopted in short duration at the time of crisis effectively.

- (D) ***Re-establish at the Earliest:*** Impact of terrorism on tourism will increase if time taken to rebuild infrastructure and restart operations is more. Though such attack dampens our spirit and affects morale it is not the time to stop our actions. Restoration of operation must be carried out on war footing to reduce the negative impact. Attracting tourists visiting nearby destinations, towards terror affected destination could be possible only if services are restored at earliest after attack.
- (E) ***Manage Resources Efficiently:*** During times of economic slowdown, resources of all forms will be costlier than earlier days. Inflow of funds will be less, operational costs touches all time high, sluggish turnover in business activity and prevailing uncertainties will prevent entrepreneurs from taking risks. At such challenging hours managing resources effectively, efficiently will be the toughest task.” cost effectiveness & customer satisfaction” must be the buzz word for tourism sector at times of crisis.
- (F) ***Understanding Changing Priorities:*** Tourism is an instinct and can never be deterred by any forces. During time of crisis the priorities of the tourists will vary drastically from the one at normal times. Understanding and establishing alternate route, other modes of transportation, accommodation facilities at safer places, emergency escape route and other such priorities will help in less loss to destination and the visitors can be directed as per the need of the situation and priority.
- (G) ***Empower Staff:*** In tourism if “Tourist is God then Staff are Angel”. Loss prevention activities are possible especially in tourism industry only when staffs are fully empowered to do their jobs. In general only security department staffs are aware of handling the fire fighting equipments available at a particular organisation. In case of any emergency other staff can handle it only if they are empowered and suitably trained earlier. Empowering staff to face the crisis will increase their loyalty to that particular organization.
- (H) ***Utilize Market Intermediaries Effectively:*** A radical shift in marketing practices is needed at time of crisis. Success of tourism largely depends upon relationship based marketing. Marketing intermediaries must be optimally utilised to deliver accurately, continuously, cost effectively, and dependably. This will help us to build confidence among stake holders of tourism. Direct marketing

will play a vital role in bringing more business especially after crisis. Differentiated marketing strategy must be well utilised with help of marketing intermediaries to attract more clients.

- (I) ***Involvement of Staff:*** Lay off during economic slowdown is quite common. Both temporary and permanent lay off hurt the morale of employee. Fear of lay off always remains high during economic slowdown. Encouraging staff involvement at all levels will help us to achieve higher degree of customer satisfaction. Top management must act swiftly and must set as an example by involving themselves in day to day activities of firms to achieve staff involvement cent percent.

Literature and research especially on tourism rebuilding after crisis such as terror attacks during global economic slowdown is comparatively less than in any other fields of tourism. When suitable combinations of above steps are implemented after careful analysis, no doubt a new synergy can be injected in tourism development especially at time of crisis.

## **Conclusion**

*“The best sort of crisis is of course one that never happens; but the next best is one you have anticipated and prepared for.”*

*Seymour, M & Moore,S*

Tourism related policy making will be effective and efficient only when forecasts from econometric models and economic changes of the countries are understood in depth (Sinclair, M.T and Stabler, M. 1997). When uncertainty prevails in global market, our planning and strategy will not fetch expected results. Readjustment of policies to achieve our vision even during time of crisis alone will help to reinvigorate the tourism sector. When economic slowdown and terrorism activities hinder the progress of tourism, interdisciplinary and multidimensional approach will put the tourism sector back on tracks. Apart from conventional economic analysis, destination specific, selective research approach with clear cut objectives will help us to grow even amidst crisis of greater intensity.

Terrorism creates fear psychosis in the minds of people who are planning to visit such destination where terror attacks take place. When tourism build bridges between people terrorism erect walls of hatred between people. Terrorism demoralizes and demobilizes population and disintegrates societies (Ahuja,R. 2004). Terror attacks cripple tourism

industry at any destination globally. Undaunting spirit, strong commitment and dogged determination on the part of tourism stakeholders are required to mitigate the challenges created by terrorism on tourism at any destination.

Though the ripples created by economic slowdown and terror attack on tourism shake the confidence, grand strategy is the need of the hour to develop tourism as a vital tool to counter economic slowdown and terrorism. Our dream of achieving world largest tourism receiver will become true, only when we explore possibilities of designing new tourism strategies to mitigate impact of terrorism on tourism.

Terror attack may come to an end but the attack has the potential to slowdown the tourism sector for a very long time especially when a nation is facing economic slowdown, the stake holder has to look in deeply. Over reacting or under reacting to problems are not the correct solutions. Grand strategy has to be developed to remove the negative image which suddenly loom the destinations. Cautious steps must be adopted which are not resource consuming as economic slowdown prevails. Regaining the confidence of the tourist must be adopted as primary goal which is possible only by involving more people. Any projects when done with cent percent people support gain more strength and terrorist may find it difficult to damage as they fear to lose support. Involving more people in tourism activities, sharing the profit gained by tourism activities with people at particular destination will help to solve the problem of both terrorism and economic slowdown of the nation. Tourism researches further in direction of solving the societal problems such as terrorism, economic slowdown are the need of the hour. Tourism is widely known for cementing ties between the people across the globe which has to be explored widely to bring a common understanding among the global population to exist in peace and prosperity.

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