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Role Of Tourism In The Development Of Bhagalpur District: A Geographical Study

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Abstract: Tourism has been a major growth industry globally for over five decades. Factors underpinning this growth include the growth of incomes and wealth, improvements in transport, changing lifestyles and consumer values, increased leisure time, international openness and globalization, immigration, special events, education, information and communication technologies, destination marketing and promotion, improved general and tourism infrastructure and so on. Since there are economic consequences to all of these factors it is not surprising that research in the area of tourism economics has increased substantially during the same period.

Keywords : Tourism, Development, Infrastructure, Heritage and culture etc

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a sunrise industry of the present century. It is called an engine of economic development. It is the fastest growing industry and claims to become number one in near future. It is a smokeless industry and considered as the industry of the industries. Tourism holds the master key which opens the vista of economic development of various sectors. In fact, all roads of development of a nation/region lead to tourism. Government both at the centre and state levels are vying to woo the tourism by developing infrastructure as well as security measures. Tourism has become non-a-days a very lucrative and self sustaining socio-economic activities of a region for both developed and developing countries.

Tourism is vital for the success of many economies around the world. There are several benefits of tourism on host destinations. Tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops the infrastructures of a country, and plants a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. Governments that rely on tourism for a big percentage of their revenue invest a lot in the infrastructure of the country. They want more and more tourists to visit their country which means that safe and advanced facilities are necessary. This leads to new roads and highways, developed parks, improved public spaces, new airports, and possibly better schools and hospitals. Safe and innovative infrastructures allow for a smooth flow of goods and services. Moreover, local people experience an opportunity for economic and educational growth. Tourism creates a cultural exchange between tourists and local citizens. Exhibitions, conferences, and events usually attract foreigners. Organizing authorities usually gain profits from registration fees, gift sales, exhibition spaces, and sales of media copyright. Furthermore, foreign tourists bring diversity and cultural enrichment to the hosting country.

II. STUDY AREA

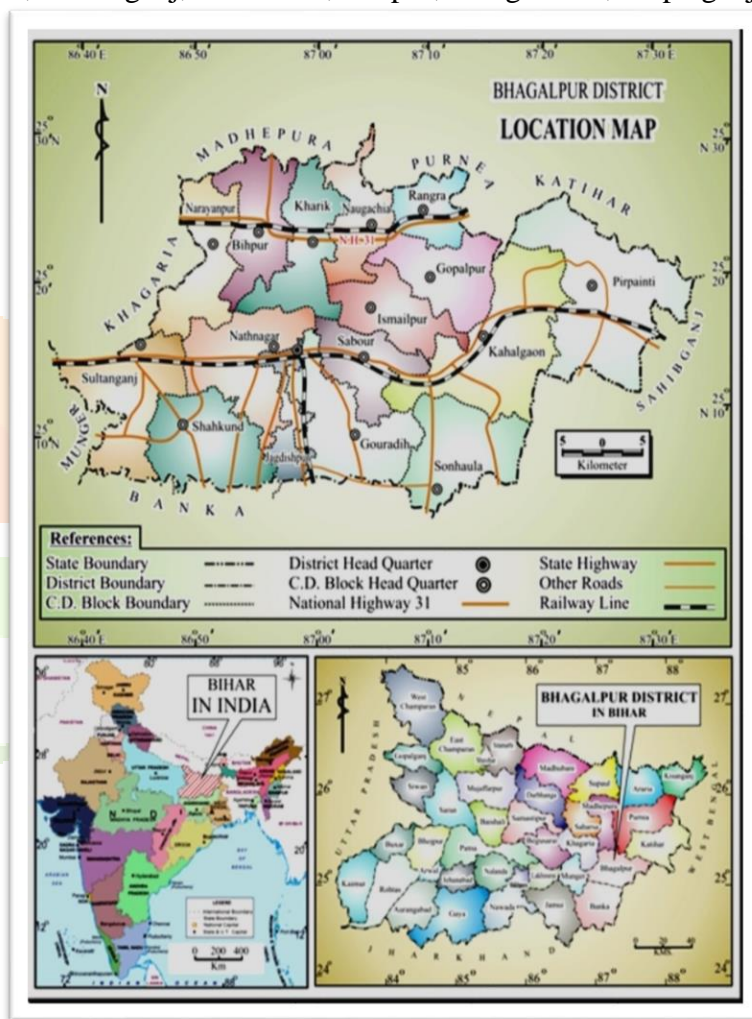
The state of Bihar can be broadly subdivided into three major units *i.e.* the main physical subdivisions are the Northern mountains, the Gangetic plains and the Central Highlands. The Gangetic plains, situated between the Himalayas and the Deccan Plateau, constitute the most fertile plains of the sub-basin ideally suited for intensive cultivation. The district of Bhagalpur constitutes the eastern part of the Anga plain in the central part of Bhagalpur division and Bhagalpur city is its headquarters. Hemmed in between the geographical co-ordinates extending between 25°05' to 25°30' North latitudes and 86°30' to 87°32' east longitudes falling on the survey of India toposheet No. 72k. The district forms a part of the Middle Gangetic alluvium plain covering an area of 2570km². It is bounded by the Munger district in the West, Sahebganj and Katihar in the east, Madhepura and Purnea in the north and Banka in the south. Bhagalpur Sadar, Kahalgaon and Naugachhia are the three main sub-divisions of the district with a total of 16 community development blocks, namely Pirpainty, Kahalgaon, Sonhoula, Sabour, Nathnagar, Jagdishpur, Sultanganj, Shahkund, Bihpur, Naugachhia, Gopalganj, Kharik, Narayanpur, Goradih, Ismailpur and Rangra Chowk, 242 Gram Panchayats, 1536 villages and 05 small towns except Bhagalpur city (Fig 1.1). In length it extends roughly 52 kms from North to South and its breadth varies from 85 to 95 kms along the east-west direction. As per 2011 census, the total population of the district stands at 30,37,766 persons (male 16,15,663 and female 14,22,103 (2.92% of the state). The density of population is 1182 per km² (2011). The district corresponds to central portion of historic 'Anga' Kingdom which flourished in ancient times.

Fig.

No. : 1.1

III. OBJECTIVE

- Identifying key tourist attraction site of Bhagalpur district.
- Evaluating cultural, historical and ecological tourism prospects.
- Analyzing how tourism generates employment and business opportunities.
- Examining how tourism drives improvement in roads, transportation, and public services.



IV. SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The present study is largely based on the secondary source of data collected from district Statistical Department of Bhagalpur district and Census handbook of Bhagalpur district and has been taken from different census reports, other printed materials and some internet sources. The collected data is processed with the help of simple statistical method and qualitative approach.

V. ATTRACTIVE TOURIST SITES

The district of Bhagalpur has a very ancient, glorious and colourful history. At the threshold of the new millennium, tourism has emerged as the biggest industry of the future. Tourism is an instrument for development. It contributes to sustainable human development, in poverty alleviation, employment generation and environmental rejuvenation in remote and backward areas. The ancient glorious cities of Bhagalpur and

places like Kuppaghat, Jain Mandir, Ajgaivinath Mandir, Vikramshila are all located in Bhagalpur district. The Bhagalpur district is a repository of old ancient sites.

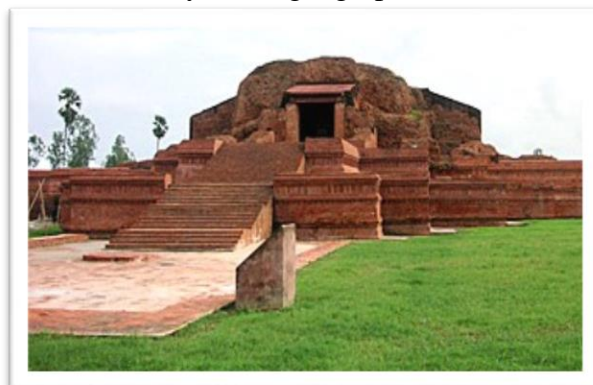
Ajgaivinath Mandir (Sultanganj) :

The temple of Ajgaivinath Mahadev is situated on a huge rock of granite stone in the middle of north Ganga in Sultanganj, 26 km west of Bhagalpur. It looks quite attractive when seen from distance. During flood days, it looks like a ship floating in water. Excellent figures are found in the temple mountain. In the month of Sawan, lakhs of people from India and abroad come here. Shiva devotees carry water from here to Babadham Deoghar and complete the 105 kilometer foot journey by carrying water offering kavar. It is said that in ancient times, Maharishi Jahnu's ashram was at this place. This hill was named Juhnugiri after his name. Later it came to be called Jahangira. This became a place of worship for saints and mahatmas. Foreign tourists started calling this hill as Jahangir Rak. There are many legends related to the construction of this ancient temple. It is said that about 400 years ago, two saints named Harinath Bharti and Kedar Bharti lived in Sultanganj. Both were guru brothers. Every day Mahatma Harinath Bharti used to go to Devghar to worship Baba Vaidyanath after taking bath in Ganga. One day when he was going from Sultanganj to Deoghar with Ganga water, he met a Brahmin on the way. Seeing water in the monk's hand, the thirsty Brahmin requested him to drink water. The monks were moved by the request of the thirsty Brahmin and as soon as they were ready to give water to drink, Shiva himself appeared and said, I will meet you in the form of Shivalinga under your deer skin. The temple of Ajgaivinath was built near the northern Ganga. According to a legend, Bhagiratha brought Ganga to this earth on the basis of his penance. Ganga running behind Bhagiratha's chariot reached Sultanganj. She was adamant on taking away the ashram of Jahanu Muni situated on the hill. The sage became angry and with the power of his penance, he picked up the Ganga in his chullu and drank it. After a lot of insistence by Bhagiratha, the sage relented and by ripping his thigh, he released Ganga. Ganga is also known as Jhanvi because it emerged from the sage's thigh.



Vikramshila University, Kahalgaon :

Vikramshila was the historical university of Bhagalpur city located in Anga district, which is located near Antichak village, about 45 km east of Bhagalpur city. This university has geographical, historical, archaeological and cultural importance. This university was established 1300 years ago by the Pala period kings. This region was a prosperous center extending to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Nepal. It was a unique center of religion, tantra, art, culture and literature. On seeing this place we easily get an idea of the dignity of Anga region. King Karna was quite advanced in the field of knowledge and science. Not only Indians but also students from neighboring countries came here to gain knowledge. Based on the Gurukul system, the education here was modern in some ways. After the excavation, information is available about the nature of the university, its establishment and education system. This site is a subject of discovery and attraction for archaeologists and historians globally.



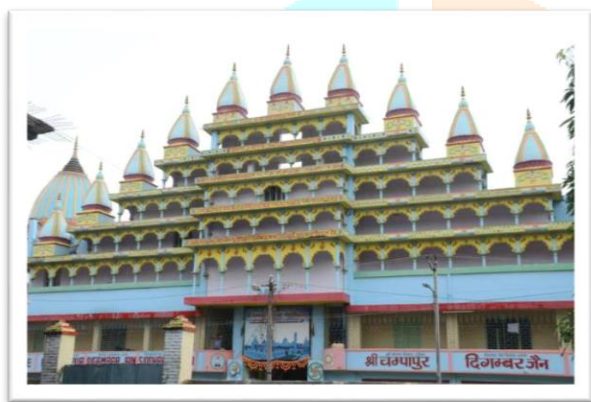
Kuppa Ghat :

Among the historical tourist places of Bhagalpur, situated on the banks of Ganga near Mayaganj, Maharshi Menhi Ashram, a center of unique peace and excellent devotion, is situated which is known as 'Kuppaghat'. It is situated about 6 kilometers north-east of Bhagalpur Railway Station. Apart from being the penance place of Maharishi Menhi Das, the cave of Kuppaghat and the artistically constructed underground corridor there is historical. It narrows inwards and divides into two branches. On the right the corridor leads west to Sultanganj, 16 miles away. The ancient Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang wrote a myth in his account regarding the exploration of this underground gallery, which does not seem credible.



Jain Mandir :

Siddha Kshetra of Jains – Champapur is an important pilgrimage site among the holy places of Jainism. The western suburb of Bhagalpur city is known as Champanagar. This is a very sacred pilgrimage site for Jains. This is the only pilgrimage place where all the five Kalyanakas of a Tirthankar occurred at one place. There is a famous temple named Jainsiddha Kshetra in Sri Champapur built in 541 BC which is known as the birth place of Lord Vasupujya, the 12th Tirthankara. Champanagar is described in the Jain scripture Kalpasutra. According to him, Tirthankar Mahavir spent three rainy seasons here during his religious travels.



Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary:

The sanctuary is a 60 kilometers stretch of the Ganges River from Sultanganj to Kahalgaon in Bhagalpur district. notified as Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary in 1991, it is the protected area for the endangered Gangetic dolphins in Asia. Once found in abundance, only a few hundred remain, of which half are found here.

The Gangetic dolphin have been declared as the national aquatic animal of India.^[1] This decision was taken in the first meeting of the National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) chaired by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 5 October 2009. Ecotourism attracts wildlife enthusiasts, researchers, and nature lovers, Dolphin watching tours boost local tourism and promotes sustainable fishing and eco-friendly tourism.



VI. DEVELOPMENT

Tourism plays a crucial role in the development of Bhagalpur district, contributing to its economy, infrastructure, and cultural preservation. While Bhagalpur is primarily known for its silk industry, its historical, religious, and ecological sites offer significant tourism potential. Here's how tourism impacts the district's development:

1. Economic Growth

Employment Generation: Tourism creates direct and indirect jobs in hotels, restaurants, transport, and handicraft sectors.

Boost to Local Businesses: Small businesses, including street vendors and artisans (like silk weavers), benefit from increased tourist activity.

Revenue Generation: Increased tourism leads to higher tax revenues for the local administration, which can be reinvested in infrastructure.

2. Infrastructure Development

Improved Transportation: Better roads, railway connectivity, and public transport facilities are often developed to cater to tourists.

Hospitality Growth: Hotels, lodges, and homestays see development, improving accommodation options for visitors.

Urban Development: Cleanliness drives, better waste management, and beautification projects often accompany tourism development.

3. Preservation of Heritage and Culture

Conservation of Historical Sites: Increased tourism encourages the protection of monuments like Vikramshila University and Colganj Rock Cut Temples.

Promotion of Traditional Arts: Bhagalpur's famous Tussar silk industry gains recognition through tourism, helping local artisans thrive.

Cultural Exchange: Festivals and fairs, like Kali Puja and Durga Puja, attract visitors, promoting cultural exchange and local traditions.

4. Ecotourism and Environmental Conservation

Biodiversity Protection: Sites like Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary raise awareness about conservation efforts.

River Tourism: The Ganges River offers potential for boat rides and eco-friendly tourism, supporting sustainable development.

CONCLUSION

During the past decades, a structural transition has taken place in our economy and service sector has emerged as an important factor in the economic development that includes generation of more job opportunities. If infrastructural and development and security measures are improved, tourism will be boosted further which will march ahead in the economic prosperity of the state in general and the region in particular.

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