

Destination Development for Tourism Growth in India - A Case Study of Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat.

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Abstract

Tourism is a complex activity which consists of various elements such as attractions, accommodations, infrastructure etc. It brings people and cultures together which contributes to the economic and socio-cultural development. Over the past decade the definition of tourism has evolved, now tourism involves travel, pleasure, holidays or simply moving from one place to reaching some destination. Different motivators make people leave the normal place where they work and reside to other places for short-term or temporary visits. Tourism being a part of service industry is an important source of income as it involves large movement of domestic and international tourists to destinations throughout the year.

India is blessed with cultural and heritage destinations and is one of the beautiful countries for tourism. Its Grand monuments act as a strong pillar for the rich and deep history in India. Most Indian monuments were built during ancient India, with constant efforts of government in maintaining the monuments tourism has flourished rapidly witnessing large number of tourists across the nation.

Key words

Tourism, Gujarat, Statue of Unity, Monument Tourism, Tourism in India, Sardar Vallabhbhai patel

Tourism in Gujarat

Gujarat is the 05th largest state in India by area and 09th largest in terms of population and is located in the western part having longest coastline of 1600km and is also one of the powerful Industrial states in India. Gujarat is blessed with scenic beauty, hills, desserts, forests, beaches, museums, religious sites, iconic structures, cuisines, art and craft, culture, a home for the only wild population of Asiatic lion in the world and having one of the largest cities of indus valley civilization. Ahmedabad the largest city in Gujarat is centrally located city in Gujarat which is well connected by road, sea-routes and having international airport and thus is considered a hub to cover all destinations nearby. Gujarat is largely visited by domestic and International tourists and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in India. Department of tourism Gujarat believes that Gujarat will be positioned as a vibrant tourist destination with improved tourist experience and enhanced investment opportunities. They are giving financial support and are developing infrastructure facilities to give tourist a pleasant and hassle free experience. Gujarat has received best tourism brand award (jury based) 2020 given by South Asia's leading B2B travel trade exhibition. A campaign is run by Gujarat tourism called "Khushboo Gujarat ki" where Mr. Amitabh Bacchan, brand ambassador speaks on cultural diversity of Gujarat and it has lead to tourism growth by 14% per annum which is 2 times of national growth rate. Various programs have been initiated in tourism sector to attract investments and to help reach the goals of "Make in India". Government has initiated annual tourism award for recognition in contribution towards tourism growth as well as excellence shown in tourism products and services. Gujarat tourism has launched calendar for Payatan Parv where they have conducted various programs and competitions to celebrate and promote domestic and international tourists on places related to Gandhiji and the values of Gandhi from 02nd October 2019 – 13th October 2019. Few of the popular tourist destinations in Gujarat are Gandhinagar, Surat, Bhavnagar, Somnath, Kutch, Bhuj, Porbandar, Vadodara, Dwarka, Pavagadh, Champaner, Saputara.

Some popular forms of tourism found in Gujarat are as follows:

- 1. Business Tourism:** Government of Gujarat organizes "Vibrant Gujarat" a biennial investor's summit which aims to bring together corporate, top business leaders, investors, policy makers, to explore opportunities in business at Gujarat. Large number of delegates travels across the world to attend this summit.
- 2. Wildlife Tourism:** Gujarat tourism department promotes eco-tourism as they have few of the world's rarest species of flora such as Khair, Babul, Ber etc and rarest species of fauna such as

Asiatic Lions, Blackbuck, Bears etc. Gujarat also has sanctuaries at Gir National Park, Kutch Bustard Sanctuary, Blackbuck national Park etc. A large amount received through tourism is well utilised in maintain the national parks and sanctuaries across Gujarat.

3. Heritage Tourism: Gujarat has a variety of temples, mosques, forts and palaces which are of great importance in India's struggle during independence. Most of the palaces are converted into hotels for providing a luxury and royal experience to the tourists. Ex Laxmi Vilas Palace, Vadodara. Gujarat also has world heritage sites to attract large number of tourists like Champaner, Dholavira and Lothal.

4. Cultural Tourism: Gujarat is rich in culture and art. It showcases the tradition in the form of dance, song and drama. Handicrafts are one of the tourist attractions which are taken by them in the form of souvenirs few of them including Bandhani, Khadi, Block Printing, Wood craft, Embroidery, Pottery etc. It generates a lot of employment amongst local as well as helps in spreading the art and culture worldwide.

5. Fares and Festival: A lot of fairs and festivals are organised throughout Gujarat which attracts many tourists across world. Some of the fairs include Bhavnath fair which is a mahapuja and dance of destruction observed on Mahashivratri, Dand darbar which is held in the month of march-april every year in Ahwa of Dand district where tourists get to see various tribal communities like Bhils, Warlis in their traditional dress. Apart from these there are fairs such as chitra vichitra fair, tarnetar fair, kevant fair and vautha fair. Popular festival observed in Gujarat are International Kite Festival also known as uttarayan which is held during Makar Sankranti where people and tourists gather together and fly kites of different shapes and sizes. Ahmedabad is hosting kite festival since 1989. Another popular festival of Gujarat attracting lot many tourist is "Nav-Ratri" which literally means nine-nights. It is festival where different forms of Goddess are worshipped every night followed by which people perform the traditional dance form named 'Garba'. One can see lot of colours during these days. Some other forms of festivals are Modhera dance festival, Tanariri festival, Rann Utsav etc.

Apart from the above forms of tourism Gujarat also offers hill and beaches, religious places, medical and wellness tourism, royal orient train, spiritual tourism, cinematic tourism, monuments, adventure and sports tourism, rural tourism, cuisines, amusement parks/theme parks/water parks etc.

Statue of Unity, Kevadiya, Gujarat

There is something unique in this soil, which despite many obstacles has always remained the adobe of great souls (Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel). Statue of unity is the world's tallest statue. Statue is of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who was one of the most prominent leaders, Indian activist and first deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister of independent India popularly known as Iron Man of India. This statue is a tribute to the leader who brought together different princely states to make a complete nation. The statue is 182meters high and is constructed on the river island Sadhu Bet facing Sardar Sarovar Dam. The statue is a natural depiction of Sardar Patel in a walking pose wearing traditional attire dhoti and shawl. People of nearby villages initially opposed the construction and demanded land rights under restitution, the government accepted their demands and the project initiated. The project was announced by Gujarat government in 2010 but the construction began in October 2013. The monument took 8 years to design which was done by Mr. Ram V. Sutar who is an Indian sculptor. Designing, engineering, construction, operation and maintenance responsibilities were given to one of the largest and re-known Indian multinational company Larson & Turbo. Statue was built in public private partnership model and the maximum money was raised by Gujarat government which was around Rs. 500 Crore. Total project cost was Rs. 2989 crores. A team of more than 3000 workers and 250 engineers were working for 33 months to make it a success. A committee named 'Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Rashtriya Ekta Trust (SVPRET)' was formed by government of Gujarat for smooth execution of the project. Various programs and drives were initiated to support the construction, out of which the popular ones were 'Run for Unity' held in Surat on December 15, 2013, a movement named 'statue of unity movement' where farmers were asked to donate used farming instruments which helped the government to collect scrap iron of 135 metric tonnes out of which after processing 109 tonnes was used to make the foundation of the statue. The monument was inaugurated by Honourable Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi on October 31, 2018 which was the 143rd birth anniversary of Sardar Patel. Immediately after the inauguration statue of unity became one of the favourite tourist destination.\

How to Reach: Statue of unity is a well thought tourist destination and is easily accessible from Airport, Railway Station and Bus transportation.

City	Airport	Rail	Distance (By Road)
Ahmedabad	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport	Ahmedabad Railway Station	198 km
Vadodara	Vadodara International Airport	Vadodara Railway Station	91 km
Surat	Surat International Airport	Surat Railway Station	156 km

*Source: <https://statueofunity.in/how-to-reach/>

One can reach from airport and railway station to statue of unity by taking direct road transport of Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation. Statue of unity is open from Tuesday to Sunday from 08.00 am – 06.00 pm. It remains close on Monday for maintenance work. Entry tickets are available on the spot at Shreshtha Bharat Bhavan from 07.30am – 05.00 pm also one can book ticket online on the official SOU site. Buses are available for tourists from parking area as it is an entire ‘No Parking Zone’.

Following are the ticket prices:

Visitor Type	Entry Ticket	Observation Deck view
Adult	INR 120+ INR 30 (Bus Charge)	INR 350 + INR 30 (Bus Charges)
Children (03-15 yr)	INR 60 + INR 30 (Bus Charges)	INR 200 + INR 30 (Bus Charges)
Children (below 3yr)	Free	Free
Express Ticket	INR 1000	All Inclusive

*Above ticket includes visit to the valley of flowers and sardar sarovar dam.

*Source: <http://sardarpatelstatue.in/book-now-2/>

Accommodation: Narmada Tent City is one of its kind and aesthetically designed tents especially for the visitors visiting statue of unity. It gives a choice of standard, deluxe and luxury tented accommodation a wide range of food and beverage managed by 5 star hotel. Other forms of accommodation are hotel by re-known luxury brand – Shreshtha Bharat Bhavan (Ramada Encore), Sardar Sarovar resort or at nearest city like Rajpipla and Vadodara.

Statue of unity is divided in 5 different zones. First zone is up-to shin which includes an exhibit floor a mezzanine and a roof. It also contains memorial garden and a large museum. Next zone 2 is up-to the statue's thigh level and zone 3 is viewing gallery at 153 meters accommodating 200 people at a time. Zone 4 is for maintenance area and head and shoulders are at zone 5.

Attractions at the statue of unity are as follows:

1. Exhibition Hall/Museum
2. Tour to Valley of Flowers
3. Tour to Sardar Sarowar Dam
4. Laser Light and Sound Show
5. Food Court
6. Boating
7. Site-seeing of Historical Shoolpaneshwar Sanctuary and Temple
8. Trekking in Zarvani Eco-Tourism Area
9. Bird Watching
10. Shopping

Upcoming attractions near statue of unity are as follows:

1. **Entertainment** – Children Nutrition Park, Mirror Maze, Digital Forest World, Ferry Service, Dino Trail, Wi-Fi, Ekta Auditorium.
2. **Garden** – Ekta Nursery, Cactus Garden, Butterfly Garden, Vishwa Van, Arogya Van, Bharat Van.
3. **Adventure** – Cycling Tour, Zarvani Eco-Tourism, Khalvani Eco- Tourism, River Rafting, Jungle Safari.
4. **Other Attractions** – Food Court, Souvenir Shop, Ekta Mall, Garudeshwar Weir.

Some of the highlights of statue of unity are:

1. It is the world's largest statue of a height of 182 meters.
2. The statue withstands wind velocity up-to 60 m/s, vibrations and earthquakes.
3. The project was completed in just 33 months with a team of around 3000 workers and 250 engineers.
4. Development of Statue of unity has created 15000 direct jobs for tribal and locals.
5. Statue of unity has entered world architecture news award 2019 which is globally acclaimed.
6. SOU has generated revenue of Rs. 52.9 crore from November 2018 - July 2019

7. It has surpassed daily average footfall of Statue of Liberty, USA with an average of 15000 visitors a day.
8. SOU was nominated as India's choice for 'Eight Wonders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.
9. SOU is listed amongst the 100 greatest places in 2019.
10. A special train will be run from 04th March 2020 under the Bharat Darshan Scheme which will have a seven nights and eight day tour package.
11. For growth of cultural heritage in India, pilots of flights are asked to make announcement when they are flying over the SOU monument.

Conclusion: The article aims at understanding how destination development helps in tourism growth in India. Statue of unity is the best example where the tourism has contributed to the socio- cultural and economic development. It has helped in inculcating visionary ideologies by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on unity, patriotism, inclusive growth and good governance amongst people. It has helped boost tourism in Gujarat and has also helped in increase of domestic and foreign tourists injecting foreign currency in Indian economy. Development of destination has helped in creating jobs for the locals creating a multiplier effect for the local economy. A lot of opportunities for the hospitality industry are open now and tourists are already experiencing world class and state of the art facilities. Thus it is observed that statue of unity is a well planned tourism destination by government of tourism, Gujarat which has added a feather in Indian tourism industry.

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