

Urban Tourism Development and Celebration of Indian Traditions with Festivals and Fairs

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Abstract

The traditions of India have long captivated the hearts and minds of tourists. Domestic and international tourist throng various sites during the celebrations of festivals and fairs. These festivals can be linked with the lunar and solar calendar followed in India as well as the periods of agricultural activities. Religious, secular and industrial festivals have been identified in this paper. The role of Ministry of Tourism in organizing festivals across the country to showcase India's traditions has also been highlighted. Tourism development requires adequate infrastructure and civic amenities and it is evident that urban centres with better facilities are better equipped to be hosts to these tourists. India Trade Promotion Organisation also organises industrial fairs in the urban centres to promote growth of tourism through visits to industrial fairs.

Keywords: Traditions, Secular, Industrial, Religious, Festivals, Fairs

INTRODUCTION

India's tradition can be captured at its festive best at the fairs and festivals, which are dazzling, theatrical and lively. In fact, any time of the year, festivities are taking place in some part or the other marked by folk dances and music with no state or region devoid of its colour. Tourist urban centers, therefore, provide transits or launching pads with adequate infrastructure. Various commuting zones are built around them dependent on transport linkages. 428 tourist urban centres were identified as per the Census of India, 1981 that are spread over the four physiographic regions of the Himalayan mountains, the coastal plains, the peninsular uplands and the coasts and islands (Anshu, 1995). It has been found that there were 639 urban tourist centres in

India in 2001. Out of total identified 639 urban tourist centres 221 were falling in Class I category followed by 150 in Class III and 104 in Class II. The number of Class IV urban tourist centres in 2001 is 97, while Class V and VI was 41 and 26 respectively. This paper seeks to highlight this great Indian tradition in all its glory.

India is known for festival celebration of secular and religious nature with several festivals being celebrated since the ancient times. Majority of the fairs and festivals are of the cultural types, but fairs held for economic and industrial reasons are also important. Since India is a country adorned by various religious sects of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jains etc. there are hundreds of festivals in all, associated with one or other religion. Besides these major religious groups, there are several tribes-the Bhils, the Gonds, the Kols, the Adivasis and the Nagas-who celebrate festivals largely associated with births, marriages, hunting expeditions etc. In places where they are strongly influenced by the neighbouring religious groups, they may celebrate some of the religious festivals(Hopkins, 1968). During these festivities there is always a congregation of people. It then becomes necessary to have adequate infrastructural facilities and civic amenities. The hygienic and sanitary conditions of the city have to be maintained to avoid any incidence of disease or epidemic. In this way the festivals and fairs are an integral part of the process of urbanization.

The festivals are numerous because of India's ageold cultural heritage. It is a gigantic task to assimilate and regionalize the festivals of India. An attempt has been made with lot of constraints to divide fairs and festivals of India. The total identified fairs and festivals can be grouped into secular and religious (Sharma, 1978).

SECULAR FESTIVALS

Holi: It is a festival of colour which is celebrated in India in every nook and corner. This festival falls at the end of winter when temperatures are neither too high nor too low. The crops start ripening. The festival is of two days when the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs and others sprinkle colour and celebrate it. This is a festival where the tribes of India also participate. Tourists like to participate in this festival of colour and prominent places like Vrindavan and Pushkar are filled with visitors both from India and abroad.

Dipawali: The festival of lights is celebrated during October-November. This is a festival where the Hindus worship the Gods and Goddess, and with the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Parsis, light their houses and burn firecrackers. Cutting across all communal barriers they exchange sweets. In different urban cities and towns special programmes are also organized for the benefit of tourists.

Phool Walon ki sair/ Sair –e-Gulfaroshan: It is a recent festival started by the Moghuls Emperor Muhammad Shah Rangila about one hundred and fifty years ago(Gupta, 1991). It is a three-day festival symbolizing communal harmony, where

the Hindus, the Muslims, the Christians, the Parsis etc, participate with tourists enjoying the uniqueness and aroma of this festival

Onam: It is celebrated by the Hindus, Muslims and the Christians equally in Kerala. It is celebrated at the end of the South West Monsoon and the season of harvest (Gupta, 1991). The streets are decorated with flowers and snake boat races are held at Arnamura, Champakulam and Kottayam. Kerala, otherwise popular with the tourists sees increase in their numbers during this time.

Bihu: It means spring in Assam. Bihu is celebrated three times in a year. In mid-April Bohag bihu is celebrated, Kati bihu in mid-october and Bhogali bihu in mid- January. But among the three the most important one is Bohag bihu. It also acts as the beginning of the new year. The festival is celebrated by the Hindus, Muslims and tribals with the same gaiety and enthusiasm. It is a festival of merriment celebrated with fervour not only by the locals but the tourists who visit the Northeast India specially during this time.

RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS AND FAIRS

Hindu festivals and fairs: The festivals and fairs celebrated by the Hindu community exhibit a seasonal character celebrated in winter, spring, summer and autumn. The winter season extends in the Pausha and Magha. The spring falls under Phalgun, Chaitra and Vaishakha months. The summer season forms part of Jyeshtha, Ashadha, Shravana and Bhadra months. Autumn season is part of Ashvina, Kartika and Agrahanya.

Winter festivals and fairs: The festival of Vaikuntha is celebrated in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with great fervour on the eleventh day of the waxing moon in the month of Pausha. At Chidambaram, Aruda Darshan festival is celebrated. On the thirteenth January, Lohri is celebrated when the sun passes through winter solstice from tropic of Cancer to the tropic of Capricorn. It is time for celebration of Makar Sankranthi and Pongal Sankranthi all over India. Ritual bath is taken by thousands of people in the Ganges at Allahabad, Hardwar, Garhmukteshwar and Patna in the Great Plains of India and Sagara Island where the Ganges enters the Bay of Bengal (Thomas, 1961). The Basant-Panchami is celebrated on fifth day of the bright half of lunar month. Narmada Mata Jayanti is celebrated to commemorate birth of river Narmada. Important places of pilgrimage on this day includes Amarkantak, Hoshangabad, Omkar Mandhata and Chandod. During the same month at Pondicherry, Muthumariamman temple festival is celebrated. Tai Pusam at Palani and Tirvidaimarudur, Thyagaraja music festival at Thiruvaiyaru on banks of river Kaveri are celebrated. Sabarimalai festival in reverence to Ayyapan is celebrated at Malabar, Tinnevely, Thanjavur, Quilon and the Sabarimalai temple in Neeti hills. Magh Mela is a big fair held at Allahabad, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and the subterranean Saraswati on Makar Sankranthi. Most of the religious festivals witness heightened tourism activity during these periods. The domestic religious tourists have

come from far away areas and even if the infrastructure and civic amenities are not satisfactory, they enjoy the time spent in these areas.

Spring festivals and fairs: The most popular cultural festival of this season is Holi celebrated all over India, but is noteworthy at Barsana, Nandgaon and Vrindaban. Shivratri celebrations commence during this time. In Manipur, Yaosang festival is held. Jodhpur and Udaipur are the venues for the annual Gangaur festival. Kaila Mata goddess festival is celebrated at Karauli in Rajasthan. The Kalapriyanath temple festival is held at Ujjain. At Tirupathi, Kanchipuram and Madurai the Brahmotsavam is held (Shastri, 1974). At Mylapore Chennai, Teppan festival is celebrated. During Vaishakha month, Pooram festival is celebrated in Trichur, Kimi Rathotsavam or Rath Yatra is held at Pondicherry. In Moirang, Lai Haraobaor festival is celebrated. In Phalguna, Nauchandi fair is held in Meerut. In Chaitra, Jarag fair or Baheria fair in Jarag village in Punjab, Bahucharaji fair at Mahesana, Annual fair at Devipalan in Gonda district of Uttar Pradesh are held. At Jwalamukhi and Surajpur-Baragaon, fairs are held during Vaishakha. This is the time of greatest tourist travels as the weather all across the country is pleasant. Tourists enjoy these festivals and with better infrastructure availability at some of these centres, they tend to make these as transit destinations.

Summer festivals and fairs: The Bhadrakali Amman temple festival is held in Pondicherry in which a procession called Vidayathi is taken out. Jyeshtha ashtami is celebrated at shrine of Khir Bhawani, 22kms from Srinagar. On tenth day of jyeshtha Ganga Dussehra is celebrated with taking a dip in river Ganga. During the Ashadha, Puri is the place of celebration where the procession or Rath Yatra of Jagannath takes place. At Pondicherry two festivals are celebrated during this time- Shreemoolanadhar temple festival and Karaikkal Ammaujar temple festival or Mango festival. The Pandharpur temple festival is celebrated in Maharashtra. Satara, Pune and Solapur are sites for celebration of Pola festival in which the farmer worship their bullocks before getting their fields ready for sowing. Janamashtami or birth of Krishna is celebrated all over the country particularly in Mathura and Vrindaban. Rangaji temple festival is celebrated around this time in Vrindaban. In the Shravana month, the festival of Rakshabandhan solemnizes. Adi Puram temple festival commemorates with enthusiasm at Srivilliputtur, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Nagapattinam, Kumbakonam, mayuram, Vedaranyam and Chidambaram. The Draupadi Amman temple festival is celebrated in Pondicherry. The Vera Lakshmi Puja associated with temples particularly in Kolhapur, Doddagaddavalli, Thiruvarur, Thiruninriyur and Thanjavur. During Bhadra month in Nainital, the Naina Devi festival is celebrated, while Nanda Devi festival affines in Nainital, Almora, Ranikhet and Bhowali. The Tirupathi festival at Tirupathi, Festival of Avanimulam at Madurai and Kaveri river festival are noteworthy in this season. The tribals of Shahbad in Madhya Pradesh celebrate Karam festival. This season is not very conducive for holding fairs, yet there are few fairs held. On Rakshabandhan, at the waterfronts in Gujarat and Maharashtra, fair is held to appease the fury of the sea. On river Ravi in Chamba, Minger mela is held. Tarnetar fair, Ambaji fair in Bannaskantha district of Gujarat are also held.

Autumn festivals and fairs: Maximum festivities throughout the country occur during autumn months. Durga Pooja, Dussehra and most popular of all Dipawali is celebrated in this season. The other popular festivals include Hoi, Dhanteras, Govardhan Pooja and Bhaiya Duj. In towns of Tiruchchendur, Tirupparamkundaram, Palani, Tirutani, Vathishwarankoil, Trichengode and Swamimalai-the Skanda Shashthi festivals affines. Maruthamalai temple festival is held at Murugan 9 kms from Coimbatore. Kathikai festival at Tiruvannamalai, Chidambaram, Madurai, Kanchipuram, Thanjavur and Srikalahasti is celebrated. Guruvayur temple festival commemorates at Guruvayur. All over Assam, Kati Bihu festival is celebrated. No festivities take place in Agrahanya month as it is considered inauspicious by the Hindus (Swami, 1962). Autumn season is the season of economic fairs, particularly on full moon day of Kartika month. Pushkar fair at Pushkar where camel fair and auction is held and Sonapur fair at Sonapur where trading of elephants takes place are noteworthy. Batisar mela held along the course of river Yamuna near Mathura is the fair for trading cattles, horses, camels, sheep and birds. Vautha fair is held 38 kms from Ahmedabad at a site known as Saptasangam Tirtha, a confluence of seven rivers-Sabarmati, Vatrak, Hathamati, Meshvo, Khari, Majham and Shedhi.

Besides these seasonal festivals, there is Kumbha mela celebrated every twelve years at Prayag, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nashik and Ardha-Kumbha or half kumbha celebrated every six years. On this occasion people from all over the country bathe in the holy rivers, Ganges, Yamuna, Kaveri, Narmada and Godavari (Sutley and James, 1967). Of course, proper facilities should be provided to prevent diseases that may ensue due to water pollution. Adequate infrastructure and civic amenities should be made available to fulfill the need of these thousands of people.

Muslim Festivals and Fairs: The major festivals celebrated by the Muslims are Id-ul-fitr, Id-ul- Zuha/Id-ul- Azha/ Baqr-Id and Muharram.

Sikh Festivals and Fairs: The Sikhs celebrate festivals that may be spread all over the year. These are Holla Mohalla, Baisakhi, Gurupurabs. Processions are taken out within the cities and big fairs are held at Anandpursahib and Fatehgarh Sahib of Punjab state(Thomas, 1971), where tourist are able to enjoy the spirit of the festivals.

Buddhist Festivals: They mainly celebrate their festivals on full moon day. The major festival is Buddha Purnima- the birth anniversary of Gautam Buddha. The others are Ashadha Purnima, Ashvina Purnima, Magha Purnima and Phalgun Purnima/Madhu Purnima. In Leh, Kaza festival is celebrated. The mountainous areas- Dharamshala-Mcleodganj, the destination such as Bodhgaya, Vaishali and Kesariya in Bihar are famous tourist destinations.

Christian Festivals: The most prominent Christian festival is Christmas, the birth of Jesus Christ, which is celebrated on 25th December every year. The other festivals include celebrations on Palm Sunday, Monday, Thursday, Good Friday and St. Francis Xaviers day on 3rd December. Goa with its beautiful and majestic churches is

the major tourist destination and requires good arrangement for accommodating and travel of the tourists.

Zoroastrians Festivals: The Parsees celebrate their New Year as Jamshed Nav Roz. The other festivals are Khor Sal, Zarthost No diso, Mukta ceremonies/ Farvardegan and the Ghambars (Kulke, 1974). Bombay witnesses great number of celebrations and tourists specially enjoy these festivities.

Jews Festivals: The Jews celebrate Rosh Hashanah as New Year Day. They celebrate a number of festivals, which include Yom Kippir, Tisha Be Av Feast of the Ninth of Av, Pessah, Shavouth, Succoth, Simhath Torah, Hannukah and Purin.

ORGANISATIONAL FESTIVALS AND FAIRS:

Department of Tourism- Festivals and Fairs: Besides the regular festivals celebrated, which have been enumerated above, some festivals are sponsored by the Department of Tourism (Ministry of Tourism, 2012). The main objective of sponsoring is to enhance tourism in the particular areas as well as to protect and safeguard the cultural heritage for which India is so famous in the world. These festivals and fairs are organized in different tourist urban centers of India scattered all around the various physiographic regions. These are enlisted henceforth.

States	Festivals
1. <i>Andaman and Nicobar islands</i>	Dweep Mahotsava, Port Blair.
2. <i>Andhra Pradesh</i>	Deccan Festival, Hyderabad.
3. <i>Bihar</i>	Patliputra Mahotsava, Patna. Rajgir Dance and Food Festival, Rajgir. Chotanagpur Adivasi Mela, Ranchi. Sonapur Mela, Sonapur.
4. <i>Chandigarh</i>	Rose Festival
5. <i>Goa</i>	Goa Carnival, Panaji. Shimoga Festival, Panaji. International Sea Food Festival, Panaji.
6. <i>Gujarat</i>	International Kite Festival, Ahmedabad. Runn of Kuchchh Festival.

States	Festivals
7. <i>Haryana</i>	Kurukshetra Festival. Surajkund Craft Mela.
8. <i>Himachal Pradesh</i>	Kangra Valley Tea Festival. Dussehra Festival, Kullu. Shimla Summer Festival.
9. <i>Jammu and Kashmir</i>	Hemis Festival, Leh.
10. <i>Karnataka</i>	Hoysala Mahotsava, Belur- Halebid. Coorg Festival. Hampi Festival. Navara Sapur, Pattadakkal.
11. <i>Kerala</i>	Boat Race Festival, Cochin-Allepey- Quilon. Great Elephant March. Nishagandi Festival.
12. <i>Madhya Pradesh</i>	Orchcha-Shivpuri-Gwalior Festival Bhojpur Festival Panchmarhi Festival. Malwa Festival.
13. <i>Maharashtra</i>	Ellora Festival, Aurangabad. Elephanta Festival, Mumbai. Ganesh Festival.
14. <i>Manipur</i>	Kut Festival.
15. <i>Meghalaya</i>	Nongren Dance Festival.
16. <i>Nagaland</i>	Autumn Festival.
17. <i>New Delhi</i>	International Kite Festival. International Citrus Festival. Garden Festival. International Mango Festival.

States	Festivals
18. <i>Orissa</i>	Rajrani Festival, Bhubaneshwar. Bali Yatra, Cuttack. Konark Dance Festival, Konark.
19. <i>Rajasthan</i>	Desert Festival, Jaisalmer. Jhalawar Festival, Jhalawar. Marwar Festival, Jodhpur. Nagaur Festival. Ramdeoji Cattle Fair, Nagaur. Shilpgram Crafts Mela, Udaipur. Pushkar Fair, Ajmer. Urs, Ajmer. Summer Festival, Mount Abu. Ramdevra Fair, Pokharan. Camel Festival, Bikaner.
20. <i>Tamilnadu</i>	Shivratri Natyanjali Festival, Chidambaram. Tea and Tourism Festival, Coonoor. Chittarai Festival, Madurai. Mahabalipuram Dance Festival. Ooty Summer Festival, Ooty.
21. <i>Uttar Pradesh</i>	Taj Mahotsava, Agra. Akbar Festival, Fatehpur Sikri. Awadh Festival, Lucknow. International Yoga Week, Rishikesh.
22. <i>West Bengal</i>	Shantiniketan, Calcutta. Darjiling Tea Festival, Darjiling. Vishnupur Festival, Vishnupur.

Industrial Fairs: Besides the cultural and the economic fairs held in the country, one of the important events is the industrial fairs. On January 1, 1992, the Trade Development Authority (TDA) merged with the Trade Fair Authority of India (TFAI)

to form a new organization under the name of India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO) with its headquarter at Pragati Maidan. Various annual as well as biennial fairs are held at Pragati Maidan (ITPO, 2013). The state of art facilities helps in the trade promotions. The ITPO has established its centres also in Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkatta and Mumbai to promote industrial fairs. The Annual fairs are Consumex in May, Sajawat in August, Shoe fair in October, India International Trade Fair in November, Tex India in December, and India International Leather Fair in January-February. The biennial fairs include Electronic India in September, Ahara- Printpack in January and Water India in April. The ITPO also organizes trade fair in Chennai related to leather and tannery industry. Trade fairs are also organized in other cities of NCR like Faridabad. The idea is to project the image of Faridabad as a vibrant and prosperous industrial hub of North India, as which produces not only tractors and household appliances, but also has several high-tech units, textile manufacturing, pharmaceutical companies, etc. Trade fairs are also organized by the industrialists in Goa, Chandigarh and Gwalior, regularly.

CONCLUSION

The growth of tourists commensurate with India's urban development scenario. The percent of urban population from 1971 onwards has been more than 20% registering growth of 38.23%, 46.14% and 36.19% in each subsequent decade. Tourism has registered phenomenal growth in the same decades with international tourist arrivals increasing from 3 lakhs in 1971 to more than 25 lakhs in 1991 and substantial growth to about 76 lakhs in 2011. Not only has the international tourist arrivals have gone up significantly, but the domestic tourism has substantially increased. This highlights the overall development of infrastructural facilities, product improvement, better accessibility, air services and innovative marketing, so important for the tourism industry and ingredients of urban landscape.

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