

Film Tourism in India



Dooars

Tourism, is a word which relates with many things like travel, explore, adventure, memories and last but not the least the business. There are many options in tourism like medical, eco, cultural etc. But there is one option 'Film' which is too much important for country like India because of being 5th largest economy in the world and the best part is that, worldwide India is the largest film provider. But in terms of film tourism we are too much orthodox in approach compared to other countries. As per the statistics of Indian Chamber of Commerce, India has a large market in the film tourism sector (nearly 3.5- 4 Billion USD by 2022) but we are lacking. The major question is why? Here we discuss some points.

In the term of scopes, India is a very big country and has many touristic places. Some of the sites are popular worldwide and certified as heritage sites by the UNESCO. But in reality, we can't convert this large number of potential tourists towards film tourism sector because

of unavailability of single window system. The red tape of governance in this country actually ruins the potentiality by enforcing different method of application of shooting, fees, structure, labor laws (Film Technicians Rule) and other political issues. Long processing time of a shooting approval and the involvement of many departments is a big burden to attract producers or investors to shoot in India. NFDC (National Film Development Corporation of India) is liable for these kinds of initiatives but in 21st century where all go to digital, there are so many things which are not updated by them with the nick of time. Hence, we lose the attention specially of foreign investors.

Film tourism is also promoted by the Ministry of Tourism of Government of India with funding support of 10 lakhs INR as per their latest publication. They give the fund to the States and Union Territories where the rule is maximum 2 lakhs INR for maximum 5 films which

are promoting touristic sites. But the problem is this kind of application is not for general film producers. State or local government decide the name of film/ film companies who are eligible for the fund and there is no transparency at all because of no digital involvement to track the data.



Bishnupur

Where Indian film industry has a better business growth (mainly Bollywood) in terms of trade, audience and market need the promotion of locations, people's story, handicraft, culture, music but those are somehow underestimated by the big production companies and policy makers. States like Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kashmir have their own model or authority to arrange for proper shooting locations but other states don't have it.

International exposure or branding is now going down from Indian authority, the cause is unknown or may be a cost cutting but for long term profit we have to promote our places in larger scale into international market. I am sharing an experience of Busan International Film Festival 2019 where I was an attendee in Asian Film Market. There was no Indian film promotion stall though it is the largest film market in Asia. Film market is to promote film related business. Taiwan, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Philippines had their stalls though their cinema industry is not so big like India. Not only in Busan, but also in European Film Market, Cannes, Indian tent is squeezing in terms

of promotion, co-production facilities which is a pathetic image. It needs an utmost care to rebuild the brand image as soon as possible.

Film festival is a key factor to increase film tourism in any country. India has its own like International Film Festival of India in Goa, Kolkata International Film Festival, Mumbai International Film Festival and so on but in a big country like India these are too small in numbers. We need to increase film festivals in all over India with the support of local, State and Central governments specially in tourism rich areas where target potentials are established previously or have a scope to emerge in the field of film tourism. Not only that, the involvement of schools, colleges and universities is also important to grab the attention of youths.



Coochbehar

In a vast country like India there are many places which have their own potential to portray as a film tourism place. Let us discuss about West Bengal where the film history is very rich. Siliguri Corridor and Dooars Region have a big potential. In many films we saw Darjeeling as a shooting spot. We saw a beautiful landscape in the Ray's cinema Kanchnjungha. Later on, many Bengali films were shot in this region. Indian popular cinema Main Hu Naa starring Sahrukh Khan, Barfi starring Ranvir Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra and many other films were shot here. But due to lack of government support, political problems, proper roadmap to shoot foreign films, no effective result could be gained. Film City

which was planned to be established near Siliguri was not implicated. If these options are revised, we will get an internationally acclaimed shooting place along Dooars Region which is full of greenery and magnificent landscape.



Athirappilly Falls

Other important places in West Bengal are Coochbehar, Bishnupur, Gour Banga Region and Sundarban. Coochbehar is the only princely state or independent state in Bengal Presidency at the time after 1947, the year of India's independence. The state was annexed with India in 1950. Coochbehar has the legacy of kingdom, undiscovered civilization 'Rajpat' in Gosanimari, which was a part of old Kamta Kingdom. There are many traditions, languages, rituals, tribes remain unexplored.

Bishnupur is a place in Bengal which is rich in Terracotta architecture in a pyramid shaped structure. This is situated in Bankura district of West Bengal. Gour or Gouda is a place in Malda district of Bengal which was the capital of Bengal under several kingdoms and mainly influenced and founded by king Shashanka. This place has its own history to tell but less explored by the film industry. The Gour Banga in Malda is the silent city which has a big history and tagged as a 'Ruined City'. Another important place is Sundarban which is

situated in the extreme south of West Bengal. Sundarban is rich in wildlife, river and sea. India's only mangrove region and beautiful landscape to shoot. Sundarban is enlisted as UNESCO World Heritage Site. These rich potentials make Sundarban a top priority for wildlife shooting.

Bedni Bugyal, Ali Bugyal situated at an altitude of 4000 meters near Haridwar in Uttarakhand. Famous for trekking but can be explored as a shooting location as well. In local language 'Bugyal' means greenery. Vast green land looks like a part of Switzerland. The place Gwaldam near Kathgodam has mind blowing



Ranikhet

landscape along with the access to the place Ranikhet which has the same potential. Khirsu located in the proximity of Dehradun also has the panoramic view of the Himalaya. Athirappilly Falls situated in the Thrissur district of Kerala which is also famous in the name of Niagara Falls of India has the potentials to bring magic on the screens. Maravanthe Beach situated in the way from Mangalore to Goa is a fantastic spot. St. Mary's Island is another exotic place situated in the Arabian Sea at the coastal part of Malpe in Udupi. This island is a set of four small islands. There are many such other places in this vast country which could be explored for film tourism.

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