

Jharkhand Tourism and Subaltern Urbanisation

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Abstract:

This paper not only investigates the understanding of holistic development but also intends to foreground the links/bridges that should necessarily exist between all the stakeholders of such development. A well-established interconnection and an enmeshed linkage between the social, the cultural and the economic vis-à-vis the locals (tribal's specifically) should be a key to Jharkhand's tourism industry. The concept of "Subaltern Urbanisation" in the context is drawn from Ranajit Guha's usage explicating: "contribution made by the people on their own that is independently of the elite." In the capitalist Now, upon who do we lay the onus of holistic development? Is it the state or the private corporate enterprises? And what is the role of the local actor - circumscribed in the socio-cultural milieu of the immediate? I reproduce Guha's idea in quest of the same, wherein touristy of the standards of the cosmopolitan be enabled without compromising the socio-cultural ethos of the localized.

Keywords: *Jharkhand, tourism, growth, culture, politics*

Jharkhand is an ultimate destination for nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. It is also famously known as 'The Land of Forests.' Jharkhand is blessed with an abundance of natural beauty across its lengths and a breadth possesses all the characteristic features to find primacy on the tourist map of the country. Jharkhand boasts the unique art, culture and rich, vibrant traditions. Karam, Sohrai, Phagua, Tussu, Vaha, Sarhul and others are its local festivals.

In contrast, Jhumair, Domkach, Chhau and Mundari its dominant dance forms—is complemented by the skilled human resource it owns. Jharkhand's potential for growth in cultural tourism, eco-tourism, medical

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tourism and mineral tourism is well-assorted. The historical importance of pilgrimage and religiosity in Jharkhand dates as back as 200 BC (the Buddhist Stupas of Itkhori). The Bhadrakali temple in Itkhori was built in 9th century AD. And the spatial concreteness across India of Parasnath, Baidyanath Dham and Rajrappa is unmatched. Chhau Mahotsav, Rajrappa Mahotsav, Itkhori Mahotsav etc. can be marked in the calendar of the Jharkhand state as events to vouch-for.

The travel and tourism sector creates more jobs per million rupees of an investment than any other area of the economy. It is capable of employing a broad spectrum of job seekers, including unskilled as well as specialised even in the rural and remote parts of the country. The interest in cultural tourism, spiritualism, 'wellness' holidays, eco-tourism and rural tourism would lean to favour Jharkhand. It can provide opportunities to maximise its natural advantages in these areas. A significant hurdle to the growth of tourism in Jharkhand is lack of awareness about the benefits can give a holistic growth to the local population. It cannot become a vibrant economic force unless the local community (both in rural and urban areas) is supportive of tourism. The rural part which largely ignored in tourism development has consequently been deprived of the benefits of employment and income generation from tourism.

In contrast, an awareness campaign that draws out local support for travel and tourism is essential for the long-term growth of the sector. It is also crucial to create awareness about the environmental impact of tourism by generating respect for the carrying capacities of tourist destinations. It is essential. As too much exposure to ecologically fragile areas (for human interference) can lead to environmental degradation. The local population must be convinced of the need to support such regulations in the interest of long-term sustainability.

What is Subaltern Urbanisation?

“Subaltern Urbanisation refers to the autonomous growth of settlement agglomerations—large clusters of people living in close proximity (which may or may not be classified as urban by the census of India or the relevant state governments)—that are generated by market and historical forces, and which are not dependent on large, traditionally important settlements or planned cities.”¹ According to Mukhopadhyay, the idea of ‘Subaltern Urbanization’ is an attempt to investigate the growth of settlements. It is neither driven by the economics of large agglomerations (as advanced by new economic geography) nor directly orchestrated by the state of private corporate enterprise. The object is to focus on the autonomy of settlement.

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Not in the sense of autarchy, but in the settlement's ability to affect its growth process and its autonomous interactions with other solutions - local or global.

This notion of autonomous interaction with both local and global intends to present these settlements as a 'glocal' variety. As it satiates the demand of the not only cosmopolitan but also autonomously protects and propels the localised. And by 'localised' I mean the socio-cultural phenomena that the settlement both represents and is known for. Thus, subaltern urbanisation is about vibrant smaller settlements— spaces outside the metropolitan shadow—sustainably supporting a dispersed pattern of urbanisation.

Concomitantly, subaltern urbanisation refers to an unseen and often unspoken process of myriad form which is affected by local actors and far from the major metropolitan areas and outside urban schemes.

What is the politics of this 'glocal' variant of tourism development?

This is not to be seen as a binary between cities and towns, or even towns and smaller settlements. "Smaller settlements need to be studied not in contrast to large cities, but for themselves, as sites of urbanity, economic activities and social transformations, and for their place in the process of urbanisation, as rural-urban links and as a part of the global economy." 2

The history of industrialisation and urbanisation of India rests between cities and villages. India has been a land of villages and Jharkhand more so the land of forests. These small towns or even statutory settlements are of course metamorphisation from villages and designated as urban by the authorities. But on what factors (morphological, socio-cultural, and economic) do its urbanity depends? Can we boast of urbanity with the local host population being deprived and poverty-ridden? India has historically been stratified, both socially and economically. Socially, it was the Caste Brahmans who controlled the society hierarchised in accordance to caste. And economically, it was the Kshatriyas (again upper caste) who ruled and owned the lands. Thus the upper castes were the dominant castes historically. When Britishers controlled the subcontinent, it was not a control gained by demolishing the caste hierarchy, but it was a settlement between the pre-colonial rulers and the colonial masters. And post-colonially, i.e. when India won sovereignty, the power was transferred to the cream amongst the natives – again the upper castes and class.

Further, when industrialisation and city formation took place, it was again a coagulation of the upper caste and class who not only controlled the cities but also controlled the villages via the cities. In this context,

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when we observe the tourism development of Jharkhand as a state, it's history mirrors rampant oppression of local, and out-sourcing of everything possible. This not only destroys Jharkhand economically but the socio-cultural fabric of Jharkhand is also ruthlessly eroded.

To protect both, what Jharkhand already had and what Jharkhand tourism aspires to be like, a holistic, amalgamated kind of approach needs to be deduced. The public sector investment needs to be made more effective. For this, it is necessary to work towards the inter-sectoral convergence of policies and programmes that could benefit tourism. Notwithstanding the state of Jharkhand being aware of the global status and global market trends, it should take note that the strength of its tourism is its originality, its history, its essence and its localised specificities. Jharkhand should build these strengths, rather than making a mad rush towards what is global and trendy. The barriers to the growth of tourism in Jharkhand are non-celebration of its powers. The centrality in marketing strategy vis-à-vis Jharkhand tourism should be its forests, its villages, its tribals', its history and its culture. The test of its mettle will be the relative sense of curiosity it can develop concerning its originality in the more massive market arena. Jharkhand needs to position tourism as a central priority. A certain feasible percentage of its GDP should be invested in the tourism industry. To improve and expand its product development, Jharkhand needs to create awareness amongst the locals concerning tackling the inter-cultural contradictions that may prop up with the expanding market. The skilled human resource that Jharkhand possesses should be positioned at both ends - producers of wealth as well as benefit of the produce. And it should also be made aware of the same. The entire population should see tourism as a business they are a part of, irrespective of the business that they traditionally do or not do. That level of sensitivity towards one's land and culture will be beneficial in various ways. The love towards culture and heritage will lead to an evolution of cultural and heritage tourism.

To meet the global demands, a world-class infrastructure can be evolved, without compromising with the local specificity. Let the big corporations set up their hotels and hospitality centres, but only when its support is a representative of the place, it is being set in. Rather than allowing the corporations to go with its standards, it should be compelled to bend its rules and be creative in accordance with the local demands. And effective marketing will lead to the centre of tourism industry without losing its essence. Such a holistic approach in the divisive and sectorial market that exists today will pave our path for a bright tomorrow.



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