



FOREIGN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AT ISHA YOGA CENTER

INTRODUCTION

Tourism has grown to be one of India's most significant industries. While a small player in terms of world arrivals, India is a major tourism destination in term of tourism receipt, ranking in the top twenty countries of the world. Tourism in India accounts for 6.8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and is directly responsible for the employment of over 23 million persons and indirectly for a further 36.6 million. This accounts for 14.2% of total Indian employment. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2014 were 7.70 million with a growth of 10.6% as compared to FTAs of 6.97 million during 2013 registering a growth of 5.9% over 2012. Foreign Exchange Earning (FEEs) from tourism in term of US dollars during 2014 was US \$ 20.57 billion (Rs. 1,20,083 crore) with a growth of 11.5% as compared to FEE of US \$ 18.44 billion during 2013 registering a growth of 4.0% over 2012.

Since time immemorial, India has been known for its spirituality, religious tolerance and its secular character. India is also internationally renowned for its ancient healing practices and alternative therapies such as yoga and meditation. Hence, it is no wonder then that people from all over the world are turning to the Indian sub-continent for guidance towards a healthier and satisfying way of life. This type of tourist segment is known as wellness market. Thus, India's wellness offerings are very understandable i.e. yoga, meditation and ayurveda. Wellness travel is now a \$439 billion industry worldwide within the \$3.2 trillion global tourism industry, representing 14 percent of all tourism spending. It's estimated to have a trillion dollars' worth of economic impact.

CONCEPT OF YOGA

Yoga in fact is 'Yog' but has been popular as yoga is an art and science of maintaining physical and mental wellbeing, has its origin in India's oldest scripture of Vedas. The famous genre cited in holy book of Bhagavad-Gita, Tatraikaagram manah kritwaa yatachittendriyakriyah; Upavishyaasane yunjyaadyogamaatmavishuddhaye means "There, having made the mind one-pointed, with the actions of the mind and the senses controlled, let him, seated on the seat, practice YOGA for the purification of the self.

Yoga is about the union of a person's own consciousness and the universal consciousness. It is primarily a way of life, first propounded by Maharshi Patanjali in systematic form Yogsutra. Yoga is guided by eight principles namely, restraint (Yama), observance of austerity (Niyama), physical postures (Asana), breathing control (Pranayam), restraining of sense organs (Pratyahar), contemplation (Dharna), meditation (Dhyan) and Deep meditation (Samadhi). In support of the eight limbs are the six branches of yoga (Raja, Karma, Bhakti, Jnana, Tantra, and Hatha).

Though, Yoga in all its forms tries to create harmony of the body with the mind and soul. However, in the modern usage the term yoga has become a mainstream discussion of the



lifestyle choices about health, stress, fitness and beauty, coupled with a billion Dollar industry in the West. They have reinvented yoga in ways that are more compatible with its commodified, pleasure-seeking culture that reduced the spiritual resources of yoga. But India is still remained with a culture that has more opportunities to put the practices of yoga to meaningful use.

YOGA TOURISM IN INDIA

The yoga guru from India introduced yoga in the Western countries, after the success of Swami Vivekananda in the late 19th and early 20th century. In 1980, yoga has become popular as a structure of physical exercise throughout the Western world. Yoga in the Indian tradition, however, is more than a physical exercise, a meditation and spiritual core. One of the six major schools of orthodox Hinduism is also called yoga, which has its own epistemology and metaphysics, and is closely related to the philosophy of the Hindu Samkhya.

People from all over the globe move towards India for Ayurveda, yoga and meditation in Rishikesh, Uttaranchal, which is practiced for centuries. In fact, India quickly emerged as a health tourism destination because of them. From time immemorial, India has been identified for its spirituality, yoga and religious tolerance and its secular nature. India is called the "Yoga Bhoomi" and the gate of heaven. India is known throughout the world for its ancient curative practices and substitute therapies. Over thousands of years, we have to get our own systems of indigenous medicinal and healing practices such as Ayurveda, naturopathy and pranic healing, to name a few. It is no wonder that people from around the world turn to the Indian subcontinent for orientation towards a more spiritually satisfying way of life.

TYPES OF YOGA TOURIST AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

According to Nichter (2013) the foreign yoga tourists visiting India can be divided into four categories. These categories allow the scholars, yoga tour planners and policy makers to draw attention to the heterogeneity and complexity of yoga tourists and to highlight their characteristics as in table given below.

S. No	Type of yoga tourist	Characteristics
1	Yoga lite	Major aim is to learn simple yoga 'asanas' for pleasure and to live from the rush; participate in a yoga workshop with a non-Indian teacher; insulate themselves from the material reality of India.
2	Yoga traveler	Yoga is not their sole reason to visit India; sometime struggled to learn yoga practice and skip the class; lack of self-transformation and search for authenticity; some of them become yoga practitioner later.
3	Yoga practitioner	Major aim is to learn yoga in greater depth; visit India in search of inner quest and authenticity; keep regular



		practice in the ashram. Some of them become yoga professional later.
4	Yoga professional	Major aim is to receive the required authorization to teach yoga in their own country; elite categories of practitioners; multiple visits to India.

YOGA TOURISM DESTINATIONS OF TAMILNADU - ISHA YOGA

Many tourist destinations in India have become the epicenter for yoga for the foreign travelers. There are numerous teachers offering classes in diverse styles of yoga, and the internet makes it easy to plan one's stay online.

Isha Foundation is a volunteer-based, non-profit organization founded by Sadhguru, to create an inclusive culture towards global harmony and progress. Its powerful yoga programs for inner transformation and inspiring projects for society and the environment are appreciated worldwide, reflected in Isha's consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Isha Foundation is an essential resource for those who wish to explore the ancient science of yoga in all its depth and dimensions. Offering a variety of programs that provide methods for anyone to attain physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing, it aims to enable people to deepen their experience of life, and reach their ultimate potential.

At Isha, yoga is taught in its full depth and dimension and communicated on an experiential level. The programs provide methods for establishing oneself in a way of life that affirms wholeness and vitality. They show that spiritual life does not deny worldly, social, and family responsibilities, but rather uses them as vehicles for personal growth and self-realization.

An array of programs is conducted regularly by Isha worldwide. The programs involve simple postures, meditation and powerful ways of transforming one's energies. They do not require physical agility or any previous knowledge or experience of yoga. Tailored to suit individuals from every social and cultural background, Isha Yoga programs provide powerful tools for inner exploration.

MAHASHIVRATRI PROGRAM IN ISHA YOGA

Mahashivratri is very significant for people who are on the spiritual path. It is also very significant for people who are in family situations, and also for the ambitious in the world. People who live in family situations observe Mahashivratri as Shiva's wedding anniversary. Those with worldly ambitions see that day as the day Shiva conquered all his enemies.

But, for the ascetics, it is the day he became one with Mount Kailash. He became like a mountain - absolutely still. In the yogic tradition, Shiva is not worshipped as a God, but considered as the Adi Guru, the first Guru from whom the science of Yoga originated. After many millennia in meditation, one day he became absolutely still. That day is Mahashivratri. All movement in him stopped and he became utterly still, so ascetics see Mahashivratri as the night of stillness.



Mahashivratri is an opportunity and a possibility to bring yourself to that experience of the vast emptiness within every human being, which is the source of all creation. On the one hand, Shiva is known as the destroyer. On the other, he is known as the most compassionate. He is also known to be the greatest of the givers. The yogic lore is rife with many stories about Shiva's compassion. The ways of expression of his compassion have been incredible and astonishing at the same time. So Mahashivratri is a special night for receiving too. It is our wish and blessing that you must not pass this night without knowing at least a moment of the vastness of this emptiness that we call as Shiva. Let this night not just be a night of wakefulness, let this night be a night of awakening for you.

REASONS FOR THE FOREIGN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AT ISHA YOGA CENTER

Some of the few reasons for the foreign tourist attractions at ISHA yoga center,

S. No	Reasons	Descriptions
1	Price	The key selling point of Indian yoga tourism is its "cost effectiveness". This is the major advantage factor of India in comparison of other competitive yoga destinations.
2	Service	Various health and mental rejuvenation activities and in consequence their benefits, and inner satisfactions are offered by world class yoga centers in India in connection with a complete yoga package.
3	Quality	Many yoga destinations of India fulfill the quality determinants such as safety and security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, authenticity and harmony of the yoga tourism activity concern with the overall aura.
4	Availability	India has an advantage in the global resurgence of interest in yoga as it has a rich heritage of indigenous knowledge coupled with strong infrastructure and skilled manpower.
5	Diversity	India offers enormous diversity in topography, natural resources and climate. It is also fascinating kaleidoscope of art and culture. India is thus a tourist destination for all reasons and for all seasons.

CONCLUSION

The tourism provides largest number of jobs in the world. India has always pointed to tourists from all over the world to experience 5000 years of civilization. Diversity of national cultures, Religions, languages, fairs and festivals, majestic nature monuments and many enchanting It can take almost the whole world. All these elements provide a unique set of capabilities, tourists to enjoy. Although the arrival of tourists is only a fraction to as Bangkok and Singapore Even in the recent boom period, connoisseur say that to attract more tourists, India have to upgrade airports, safety and security, roads and other infrastructure to world standards. The success the tourism industry will largely depend on the success of all strategic fronts. India must change their traditional approach to the market is more competitive and



modern. India has to develop unique market position, brand and image that cannot be owned by another player. India can do it presents as a place of spirituality, meditation and yoga.

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