

Padmalaya: An Emerging Tourist Center

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Abstract

This paper explores the applicability of transforming the current state of tourism in Padmalaya to a sustainable tourism model. To plan and implement this, a special tool of SWOT analysis is used. A series of interviews was conducted and observation was made in order to identify the current status of this tourist center. In addition, the visitors of the place were surveyed to assess the rate of fulfillment of sustainable tourism development in the study area. Local residents were also taken into account by using a survey to reveal the problems and attractions of this tourist center. Results showed that the existing tourism activities at Padmalaya did not conform to sustainability requirements. Thus, a SWOT analysis was used to identify the required management strategies to improve the tourism activity at this place.

KEYWORDS: SWOT, Analysis, Padmalaya.

Introduction

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world getting currencies to global economy and creating new job opportunities as well as providing socio-cultural interactions. Tourist centers in India are unique cultural outposts that serve as a nodal point for the promotion and preservation of the country's unique cultural heritage through the admixture of diverse cultural elements (Behera 2001). Padmalaya in Khandesh area of Maharashtra is one of the religious centers where tourism activity is in practice since long back. Located near the national highway and central railway route, this place has a lot of potential to be developed as a important tourist center in Khandesh. With this view in mind, the present paper attempts to study Padmalaya as an emerging center by analyzing its SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Strengths). A SWOT analysis is a classical tool available for better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses. It reveals opportunities that can be taken advantage of and actions that can reduce the impact of threats, (Girish, et. al., 2014).

Aims and Objectives

The present paper focuses on following aims:

1. To investigate the current status of Padmalaya as a tourist center
2. To create a SWOT analysis of Padmalaya
3. To give suggestions for overall development of Padmalaya as a tourist center.

Data Base and Methodology

In view of analyzing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and threats to Padmalaya, the technique of SWOT analysis is adopted. On the basis of empirical data and primary information collected through questionnaires from the visitors, researchers and administrators, SWOT analysis is carried out with respect to existing condition of Padmalaya.

Study Area

Padmalaya is a village situated 10 km from Erandol in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra and 31.5 km from Jalgaon. in the scenic natural surroundings of the mountain. 'Padmalaya' in Sanskrit "padmasya Alaya" means "Home of Lotus". Padmalaya has a temple of Lord Ganesh. Near the temple, there is "Bhim Kunda" a 2 leg mark shape ponds in the 'Anjani river'.

Padmalaya is located at the intersection of 20^o 87' North latitude and 75^o 19' East longitude. Its location is at the top of the hill. The area in which Padmalaya is located is drained by the tributaries of the Tapi River, which flows to the north of Padmalaya. Padmalaya is located on Dhule-Nagpur national highway number six. It is situated in Erandol tahsil of Jalgaon district of Maharashtra. Tourist can reach this place by taking route from Jalgaon or Dhule. Padmalaya is located on the Deccan traps, which is made up of basalt. There are small temples on all sides of the main temple. The padukas of Shree Govind Maharaj are located in front of the temple. There is a huge bell weighing 440 kg next to the padukas.

SWOT Analysis

Religious centers at natural sites like Padmalaya provide an opportunity to the tourists to perform their religious activities and come into the contact of nature. Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of Padmalaya are found as given below.

Strengths

1. Accessible by road and railway. Pleasant weather at this place due to elevated location is ideal for the tourists..
2. Scenic beauty, which draws tourists from the crowded and polluted towns and cities.
3. Terrain is ideally suited for various adventure activities.
4. It can attract tourists all throughout the year.
5. Hospitable people in the vicinity.

Weaknesses

1. Inadequacy of accommodation facilities
2. Funds constraining the development of region.
3. Inadequacy of information channels.
4. Neglected tourist center.
5. Inadequacy of marketing facilities.
6. Lack of adequate infrastructural support.

Opportunities

1. The concept of holidaying is gaining popularity in India among various classes of people.
2. Increased disposable incomes of the Indian middle class society of India.
3. Adventure sports and tracking.
4. Eco- tourism is gaining popularity.
5. Religious importance of the Ganesh temple.

Threats

1. Various other tourist places like Ajanta are providing stiff competition.
2. Environmental factors also impose a threat.

Conclusion

As this place is accessible by railway and road, it has a great potential for its development as an important tourist place in the state. Though there are certain weaknesses like shortage of developmental funds and poor infrastructural facilities, the place possesses many opportunities like vast scope for adventure, religious activities and ecotourism. This site can be linked with popular tourist spots like Ajanta, Ellora and networked with religious and cultural tourism in the nearby region. Therefore, a multi-triangular cost effective tourism with special reference to religious and ecotourism could be initiated. Most of the development belongs to individual operators of the area. Funds are limited and development scale is not large. Unified planning and management is necessary.

Suggestions

- Padmalaya must be able to provide hotels to cater to all segments of the society.
- It must open avenues for business opportunities; could be tourism related and monetary funds on its religious background.
- Entertainment facilities must be provided in order to ensure a longer stay of the tourists. They must be ensured with unique souvenirs which they can take back with them.
- Advanced sources of communication like internet must be used effectively to influence and advertise.
- Family entertainment facilities must be developed. More playgrounds and parks must be made available. Schools can also be targeted for excursions.
- Basic infrastructural facilities have to be developed in further. Roads need to be improved.
- Parking spaces must be provided.
- Basic necessities must be provided. A diverse range of cuisines must be provided to cater to the wants of tourists from various places.
- Shopping facilities need a boost and village huts should be promoted.
- Information must be available to the tourists at different places.

References

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