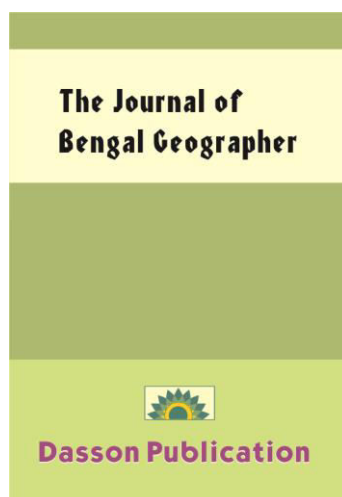


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Culinary tourism: a recent trend in global tourism; finding its present status and future scope in India

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Abstract

Food Tourism is one of the latest and growing trends worldwide in recent years; since mounting number of tourists interested in culinary destinations – a trend that seems to consolidate year after year. In India, tourism industry is one of the largest sectors in terms of its contribution to the country's GDP and FEE. A large number of Foreign Tourists visits India every year. Besides enjoying India's scenic beauty of amazing landscapes, they are stepping into pursue the food culture of the country. Indian cuisine is world famous for its charm, aroma, taste, diversity and extravagant spices and the country is rightly known as "HOME OF SPICES". The main objective of the present study is to evaluate the present status, future scope as well as to suggest some ideological and theoretical strategies to promote Culinary Tourism in India. This paper is based on secondary data and review of literatures and Predictive Forecasting Method has been used. The study reveals that, in India Food Tourism is in its embryo stage though the country possesses a diversified and richly cuisine tradition. The study may be helpful to the Government policy makers to push the country's economic growth through the promotion of Culinary Tourism.

Key words: 1. Food Tourism, 2. Indian Cuisine, 3. Culinary Tourism, 4. Gastronomic Tourism, 5. Tourism Planning, 6. Tourism Development.

1. Introduction

The Indian Tourism sector is one of the largest service in the country in terms of its contribution to the Gross Domestic product (GDP) and Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE), as well as providing employment to millions. Tourism in India is witnessing widespread growth on the back of increasing inbound tourism. Significantly, the country has the potential to become a major global tourist destination, with the tourism sector expected to contribute around INR 3414.8 billion (US\$ 770 billion) by 2021. Foreign Tourist Arrival (FTA) in the country has increased substantially during past decade. India offers various tourism options due to its vastness and diversity, attracting tourists from all over the world. While tourism industry is blossoming year after year, growing as the latest trend of last few years are Food Tours. Tourists are now looking marry two of the most exciting things – travel and food. Various Culinary journeys are being organised throughout the country by a few Tour Operators and Travel agents that leave the travellers with fond food memories⁽⁶⁾, but the Govt initiatives is worth mentionable! Since the latest trend of Food Tourism, has immense potential to flourish India's tourism industry and to push the country's economic growth, it has become the need of the time to promote Indian Food Tourism and to draw the attention of the government as well.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of the study are as follows-

- i) To evaluate the future potentiality of the country to become a renowned 'Culinary Tourist Destination' in the world.
- ii) To portray the picture of current status of culinary tourism in India.
- iii) To formulate the ideological and theoretical strategy to promote Food Tourism in India.

3. Methodology and database

The study is mainly based on secondary data and review of literatures and reports and essays published on the Internet. These secondary data are collected and compiled from the various reports published in the websites of the Union Government Offices. Statistical techniques are used for deriving the results and cartographic method is applied for various charts. The study also applies predictive forecasting method to explore the future of culinary tourism, based on past and current trends in the industry.

4. A) concept of culinary tourism

The growth of special interest tourism is seen as a reflection of the increasing diversity of leisure interests of the early twenty-first century leisure society (Douglas, Douglas, & Derret, 2001). Post-modern tourism is slowly changing its traditional continuum to being a part of an overall lifestyle that corresponds to people's daily lives and activities (Hobson & Dietrich, 1994). The growth of culinary tourism is seen as an outcome of a trend where people spend much less time cooking, but choose to pursue their interest in food as a part of a leisure experience such as watching cooking shows, dining out and the like (Sharples, 2003).

Food Tourism is an experimental trip to a gastronomic region, for recreational or entertainment purposes, which includes visits to primary and secondary producers of food, gastronomic festivals, food fairs, events, farmers market, cooking shows and demonstrations, tasting quality food products or any tourism activity related to food (Hall and Sharples, 2003).

According to the World Food Travel Association (WFTA), food tourism is "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near."

Thus, Gastronomic tourism applies to tourists and visitors who plan their trips partially or totally in order to taste the cuisine of the place or carry out activities related to gastronomy.

4.B) aspects of culinary tourism

- The Culinary tourist is a special interest tourist whose interest in food is the primary reason influencing his travel behaviour, at the same time, eating and drinking being ultimately cultural affairs (Muscot, 1986), the culinary tourist is also a cultural tourist.
- The territory is the backbone of gastronomic Tourism.
- The product is the basis of food Tourism.
- Gastronomy allows the tourists to access the cultural and historical heritage of the destination through tasting, experiencing and purchasing.
- Culinary tourists have higher-than-average expenditure, they are demanding and appreciative, and they eschew uniformity.
- Culinary tourism is an authentic experience of a sophisticated life-style in a pleasant environment, associated with the good-life and the economic well being of consuming exclusive high quality locally grown products.
- Tradition and Innovation coexist in a neutral manner in Food Tourism.
- Types- the culinary tours can be roughly classified into three types, these are-
 - a) The cooking school holidays.

- b) Dining at restaurants famous for their local cuisines or their celebrity chefs and visiting food markets; and
- c) Visiting food producers with tours specially related to just one product (e.g. coffee plantation tours, tea plantation tours, chocolate lovers tours, the ubiquitous wine tours and the like).

4.c) Benefits of culinary tourism

- ✓ Gastronomic tourism has a great ability to generate rural development. It is helpful to increase rural revenue sources and improve income levels and employment of local labour (especially women).
- ✓ Tourists increasingly want foods which emphasize the heritage and culture of a place; assist the preservation of traditional forms of agriculture and cultural heritage.
- ✓ Likewise Gastronomy represents an opportunity to revitalize and diversity tourism involves different professional sectors (producers, chefs, food markets etc) and rings new uses to the primary sector.
- ✓ As the Food Tourists are concerned about the originality of products and thus helps to keep the regional identity through the authentic cuisine of the place.
- ✓ Cuisine helps to project an image of a country that is culturally rich and surprising, with reasons for attracting even more diversity. This can be seen as a strong element for capturing new markets and raising awareness for the innovation and quality incorporated into traditional products.
- ✓ Culinary Tourism plays a vital role in adding value to the destinations, as tourists appreciate local culture and cuisine. Tourists are less likely to make cuts on their food budget, which will substantially favour the local restaurants, eating places and the food industry and the destinations economy as a whole.
- ✓ Besides helping to reduce seasonality of tourism demand, it encourages community involvement.

4.d) Trends driving food tourism

Following are the trends that shapes the interests of the visitors towards food tourism²-

- ✓ **Trend1:** Disposable income and spending patterns.
- ✓ **Trend2:** Demographic and household change-according to a research by Future Foundation, families are also becoming increasingly democratic in food choice.
- ✓ **Trend3:** Individualism- means uniqueness as tourists search out local, fresh and good quality cuisine that reflects the authenticity of the destination.
- ✓ **Trend4:** Multiculturalism- has become an everyday concept in the daily life of the consumer, driven by imagination, globalization, the internet etc and the relentless growth in International Tourism. What were once exotic foods have become foods of first choice and today Curry is the United Kingdom's favourite dish.
- ✓ **Trend5:** The role of the celebrity chefs and media.
- ✓ **Trend6:** well-being Food- there is higher awareness of health issues and food purchase decisions.
- ✓ **Trend7:** Food as an Oasis- when an holiday, food become the social occasion- the notion of the meal as a 'Time-Oasis' seems to e a very powerful theme.
- ✓ **Trend8:** The desire for New Experience and Cultural Capital.
- ✓ **Trend9:** The science of food.
- ✓ **Trend10:** However, the consumer is a Hypochondriac.
- ✓ **Trend11:** The rejection of 'Mac Donaldisation'.

5. Global status of culinary tourism

For many of the world's billions of tourists, returning to the familiar destinations to enjoy tried and tested recipes, or travelling further afield in search of new special cuisine, Gastronomy has become a central part of the tourism experience. Against this background, food tourism has gained increasing attention over past years¹³.

Culinary tourism is a rapidly emerging niche market segment presently at its infancy stage, which has a short history since early 2000's (Feimster, 2009). It has a great growth potential by its own as well as combined with other tourist activities such as adventure, health, medical, winter, agro and cultural tours. Food being an unavoidable part of human existence, gastronomic experience can be an added attraction for any type of tourism activity, apparently appealing to a wide range of customers. Gastronomic tourists are more likely to be affluent middle aged or elderly couples (Shenoy, 2005), but not exclusively limited to any demographic or ethnic group (Feimster, 2009; culinary niche markets, nod.). Dining out is one of the top 3 tourist activities and nearly 100% tourists eat out while travelling (Schmantowsky, nod.; Shenoy, 2005). Today, the culinary activities include food festivals, mega events, fishermen's and farmer's markets, cooking schools, agro tourism, wine and beer tasting and obviously restaurant dining.

The growth of tourism worldwide is an obvious fact; it is one of the most dynamic segments within the tourism market. According to the Global Report on Food Tourism of United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), though there is still no systematic analysis of the economic impact of the Food Tourism, the weight of gastronomy in tourism revenue in destinations is very significant, at around 30%, and the destinations have a large margin to work within this respect.

According to International Culinary Tourism Association (ICTA), deliberate food travellers tend to spend approximately 50 percent and regular food travellers tend to spend one third of their travel budget on culinary activities. A domestic survey in US reveals that 17 percent leisure travellers engage in culinary activities (culinary niche markets, n.d.), which is forecasted by ICTA to grow rapidly in near future.

Group that provide growing markets for food tourism are summarised below¹⁻

- DINKs- Double Income No Kids (between 25-35 years of age)
- SINKs- Single Income No Kids (between 25-35 years of age)
- Empty Nesters- Parents whose children have flown the family nest. Between 45 to 55 years of age, well educated, high disposable income.
- Boomers- Members of the baby boom generation in the 1950s.
- Divorces- Searching for new partners and subsequently will take prospective partners out for dinner and away for romantic weekends.

Many countries are actively developing and promoting Culinary Tourism, realising its potential to contribute to the growth of National Economy and agriculture. The popular culinary tourism destinations are **France, Italy, California(USA), Canada, UK, Australia, Spain, Russia, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Korea, Brazil, Georgia, Greece** etc and the emerging destinations are **Mexico, Croatia, Vietnam, Japan, China** etc. Though India has not been recognised exclusively as Food Tourism destinations till now by International community, but majority of the tourists prefer to taste unique Indian Cuisines while their visit to the country, is also a fact.

6. Food tourism in india

6.a) Indian cuisine

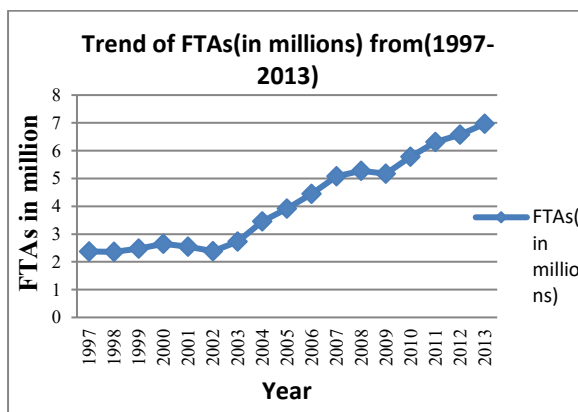
Indian cuisine, in addition to climate, geography, culture and customs, along with a major part of India may be the Indian Food Culture is rich and diverse. Indian Cuisine is world famous because of its abundant utilization of herbs and exotic spices, which produce a unique, aromatic eating experience for the eaters everywhere. The culinary of Indian cuisine is a science, which has developed over thousands of years. The classic range of regional cuisine from North to South and East to West reflects the great size of India and its unparallel heritage. The Indian Cuisine in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian Indian food, has an unmatched charm because of the extravagant spices used in Indian cuisine, thus India is better understood as “**HOME OF SPICES**”⁴.

6.b) Present status of food tourism in india

From snow-freckled peaks that cap the country to the lazy backwaters down south, from the earthiness of the east to the spunk of the west, India offers a variety of mind-thrilling backdrops for tourists.

India is ranked as 42nd place worldwide in terms of tourism numbers in 2013, there were 6.97 million Foreign Tourists Arrivals(FTA) in India (0.64% share in the world), resulting in US\$ 18445 million of Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEE). Alongside this, there were 1145.25 millions of domestic tourists visiting within this country (India Tourism Statistics, 2014, Government of India, Ministry of Tourism). This makes Tourism sector one of the largest sector that contribute to the country’s economic growth through FEE.

Fig(I):Trend of FTA(Million),India 1997-2013;FIG(II):Trend of FEE(US\$ Million) from FTA,India 1997-2013



FIG(I) (ANNEXURE-1)

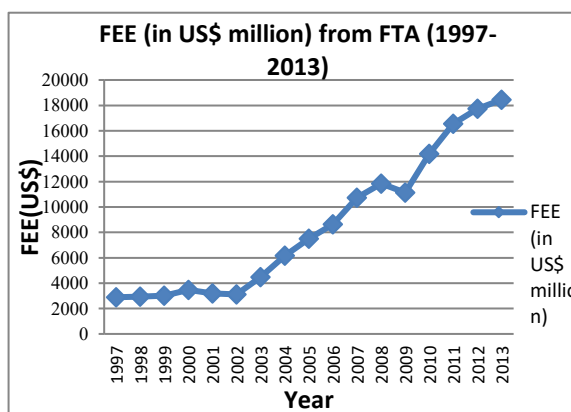


FIG (II) (ANNEXURE-1)

Source[FIG(I) & (II)]: India tourism statistics, 2010, GOVT. OF INDIA, MOT

During the year 2013, maximum tourists arrived from Western Europe(almost 22 percent of total FTA, comprising UK-11.62 percent, Germany-3.62 percent and France-3.66 percent), followed by North America(nearly 19 percent of total FTA, including USA-15.58 percent and Canada-3.66 percent), South-East and East Asia(nearly 18 percent of total FTA, comprising Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Japan Korea etc) and others. USA occupied the top position as a country with 1085309 tourist arrivals in India during 2013, followed by UK with 809444 tourist arrivals (Annexure-2). Other major source countries of India’s FTA were Russia, Canada, Germany, France, Malaysia, Japan, Australia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc. A Global report on Food Tourism by UNWTO, 2012 states that Food Tourism(eating in restaurants) is the number one leisure activity

for US travellers when they visits other countries. Also Culinary Tourism has already become a popular activity in the countries like France, Germany, Russia, Canada, Australia, Malaysia, Korea etc. During the year 2013, maximum foreign tourist received by Maharashtra (28 percent of total FTA) followed by TamilNadu (20 percent), Delhi (11.5 percent), UP (10.3 percent), Rajasthan (7.2 percent), West Bengal (6.2 percent), Bihar (3.8 percent), Karnataka (3.2 percent) and Goa (2.5 percent), while the other states and UTs received the rest of FTA (10.1 percent), among which major states are Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujrat etc(Annexure-3) . Some of these destinations like Delhi, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh (Hyderabad), Punjab, Kerala etc are popular foodie hotspots, further majority of the tourists paying visits to these places are well aware of Culinary Tours and have keen interest to experience unique and authentic cuisines.

Fig(iii): Percentage share of FTA of major countries,India2013

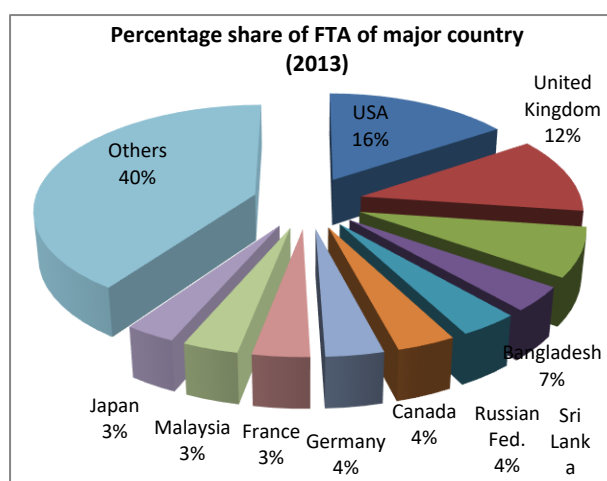


FIG-(III)

Fig(iv) Percentage share of FTA of States & UTs,India2013

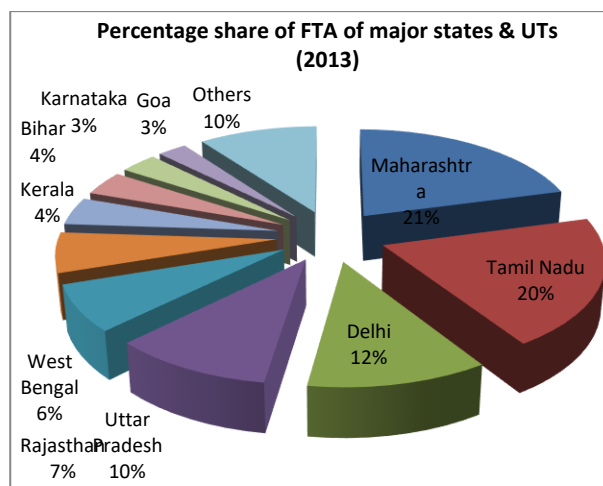


FIG-(IV)

SOURCE[FIG(III) & (IV)]: INDIA TOURISM STATISTICS, 2010, GOVT. OF INDIA, MOT

Thus India is one of the famous and richest destination in the world, and the latest trend is Food Tourism, as the country is not only gifted with picturesque scenic beauty, rich heritage, diversified culture, customs, festivals but also diversified, delicious and spicy Cuisine.

A global report on Food Tourism issued by the UN World Tourism Organization states that, “over a third of tourist spending is devoted to food”, which shows how important the cuisine of a destination is. Tourists are now looking to zest/relish two of the most exciting things hand in hand-Travel and Food. Besides the Indian charm, tourists are now enthusiastic and dipping into explore the food culture of the country. It’s just not the sensational landscapes but also the mouth watering and finger licking flavours that makes them alluring. Now a days, such Food Tours are definitely increasing but there is no mention or no data is available regarding Food Tourism, in the Indian Tourism Statistics, 2013.

The Indian cuisine indeed is a universal gastronomic delight and the tourists across the ocean really want to explore the food and culture of India. This growing trend could be easily perceived through the personal experience of the people directly engaged in tourism sector in Indi. Due to this fact, some Tour Operators and Travel Agents are conducting such Food Tours

more frequently to promote Indian food and culture to the tourist. These tours include a lot of food adventures like eating in the most popular restaurants, exploring fresh food markets, trying local ingredients with a chef, cooking classes and even street food.

With the vast size of the country and diversified regional culture and diet, the food cooked by the people in different geographical region is different. Every region has its own regional cuisine identity and those conducted food tour packages, tourists can now enjoy consuming delicious food, starting from Bengali dishes such as fish, potato curry, spicy rice and delicious mixed vegetables all in a platter to that of tamarind taste food in southern part of India, the visitors can really enjoy eating delicious cuisine in different parts of India.

Indians are also opening up to the idea of travelling for food. During such Food Tours, the tourists can stay with a local family, go shopping for groceries, cook with them and imbibe their culture. Due to this uniqueness the trend of Food tourism in the country shows a steady growth. Some of the foodie hotspots in India are- Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kerala, Kolkata etc.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

Tourism is the largest and fastest growing industry worldwide and in India as well. The country pulls a large number of Foreign Tourists every year and tourism contributes largely to the country's GDP through FEE. Gastronomic Tourism is in great demand globally, and will continue its growth in the future since many tourists prefer both the sightseeing and relishing authentic regional cuisine to explore the cultural heritage more exclusively and heartily, hand in hand. India could be the next one of the most potential Food Tourism destination worldwide due to its diversified culture and cuisine which is relished all over the world. Though such Food Tours are being organised only by a few Tour Operators, but still in its tomtit stage and no government initiatives have been noticed in this continuum.

Food Tourism not only promotes local economic development and national income through more FEE, but also helps to keep regional identity, cultural heritage of a particular place. Therefore, Food Tourism is not only an emerging trend; it can play a crucial role for a country's economic development. For Indians perspective, it is not customary but has become the need of the time to formulate definite policies to promote food tourism so that this small bud after germinating would definitely thrive the tourism industry and fire-up the regional and national economic development.

Following are some options that could be considered for promoting food tourism-

- ✓ Proper understanding and knowledge of cultural characteristics and heritage of the territory (the destination) which the government reckon to unfurl.
- ✓ Identify the unique and authentic cuisine of a particular destination.
- ✓ Conduct a market survey to validate the market, the opportunity, current market demand and varied taste of Culinary Tourists. This will be helpful to formulate a Food Tourism strategy and target specific markets.
- ✓ Conduct a detail industry research- which forms a solid backbone for a sustainable Food Tourism Strategy.
- ✓ Conduct a survey to assess the destinations food and drink experience, ant it should include on-site visits, interviews, service-journey-analysis and primary research. This in depth analysis can serve as the cornerstone for a Food-Tourism strategy.
- ✓ Build a consensus-either for the budget or for the project overall, including policy makers, local government officials, and local residents before formulating a formal food tourism strategy.

- ✓ Proprietary cluster analysis and **Geo-mapping** to visualise the resources of destination and to understand the relation between them.
- ✓ Further, traditional strategies in the development of food tourism must give way to strategic tools to articulate the quality, variety and uniqueness of local products and gastronomy of a territory. These offerings, presented with authenticity and as experiences to be lived, must be based on the values of cultural identity, sustainability, the quality of tourism products and services, and consumer protection. Also market knowledge should be one of the pillars of a successful and efficient strategy.
- ✓ Proper execution of the strategy and a good communication and through campaign worldwide through the media particularly Television and use of Internet viz. Food Blogs and social Networks to built an image of the destination.. The campaigning may be included under Indian Tourism promotion theme of “Incredible India”.

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Annexure-1:

year	FTAs(in millions)	FEE (in US\$ million)
1997	2.37	2889
1998	2.36	2948
1999	2.48	3009
2000	2.65	3460
2001	2.54	3198
2002	2.38	3103
2003	2.73	4463
2004	3.46	6170
2005	3.92	7493
2006	4.45	8634
2007	5.08	10729
2008	5.28	11832
2009	5.17	11136
2010	5.78	14193
2011	6.31	16564
2012	6.58	17737
2013	6.97	18445

Source: India tourism Statistics, 2010, Govt. Of India, MoT

Annexure-2:

Table 2: FTA in

Sl No	Source Country	FTAs	percentage share
1	USA	1085309	15.58
2	United Kingdom	809444	11.62
3	Bangladesh	524923	7.53
4	Sri Lanka	262345	3.77
5	Russian Fed.	259120	3.72
6	Canada	255222	3.66
7	Germany	252003	3.62
8	France	248379	3.56
9	Malaysia	242649	3.48
10	Japan	220283	3.16
	Total	4159677	59.7
	Others	2807924	40.3
	G.Total	6967601	100

Annexure-3:

Table 3: FTA Major destination state & uts in india,2013

rank	state/Uts	FTAs	percentage share
1	Maharashtra	4156343	20.8
2	Tamil Nadu	3990490	20
3	Delhi	2301395	11.5
4	Uttar Pradesh	2054420	10.3
5	Rajasthan	1437162	7.2
6	West Bengal	1245230	6.2
7	Kerala	858143	4.3
8	Bihar	765835	3.8
9	Karnataka	636378	3.2
10	Goa	492322	2.5
	Total of Top 10 states	17937718	89.9
	Others	2013308	10.1
	Total	19951026	100

Table2: Foreign Tourists arrival & Source Countries in India, 2013 Table3: Foreign Tourists arrival & Major destinations (States & UTs) in

Source(Table2&3): India tourism statistics, 2010, Govt. Of India, MOT