

The impact of transport on tourism development in Jaisalmer district

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Abstract: The Indian state of Rajasthan is home to the popular tourist destination of Jaisalmer, which is well-known for its majestic forts, colorful desert landscapes, and rich cultural heritage. The region's tourism development is significantly shaped by the transit infrastructure that serves Jaisalmer. This paper delves into the multifaceted impact of transport on tourism in Jaisalmer, analyzing its significance, challenges, and future prospects. Our findings demonstrate the important role that transport plays in the growth of tourism.

Keywords: Cultural heritage, Majestic forts, Desert landscapes, Tourism development.

INTRODUCTION:

Jaisalmer, often known as the "Golden City," is a popular travel destination because of its rich cultural legacy, desert scenery, and historical significance. Three crucial elements are accommodation, attraction, and accessibility for the growth of tourism (1). This remote location's accessibility is largely dependent on the transportation infrastructure, which is a major and top ranking factor in the development of tourism because it shapes travel patterns and experiences (2). Without it, visitors are unable to visit Jaisalmer's tourist attractions. The Jaisalmer district has major tourist destinations (3); the Golden Fort, the Gadisar Lake, the Sam Desert, the Desert National Park, and the Khuri Village Safari. Additionally, there are Jain temples such as Parshwanath Temple, Sambhavnath Temple, Chandraprabhu Temple, Rishabh Dev Temple, Sheetalnath Temple, Mahaveer Temple, and Lodrava Jain Temple, as well as Hindu temples such as Laxminath Temple, Satimata Temple, Chaturmukh Shiv lings (Lodrava), The Sun Temple, Tanot Mata Temple, and Ramdevra. Not to mention the newly developed tourist spots, Jaisalmer War Museum, Longe wala Post, and Bablion Point at the India-Pakistan border.

Transportation Infrastructure in Jaisalmer:

a. Road Transport: A network of both national and state highways connects Jaisalmer well, making it simple to reach nearby cities like Jaipur and Jodhpur. The Golden Quadrilateral project has increased road connection, which has increased tourism. Jaisalmer's road connectivity to different regions is shown in Tables No. 1 and 2.

Table No. 1: National Highway Passing through Jaisalmer District(4)

S. No.	National Highway (NH) no.	Road Connectivity	Total Length of NH (in Kms)	Length in Jaisalmer (in Kms.)
1	11	Haryana Border-Chidawa to Myajlar Via Fatehpur-Ratangarh-Bikaner-Bap-Phalodi-Pokaran-Jaisalmer	763.61	262.65
2	68	Tanot-Ramgarh-Jaisalmer-Barmer-SanchoreUpto Gujrat Border	422.27	194.07
3	70	Munabao (Pakistan Border) -Myajlar-Dhanana-Ghotaru-Tanot	273.87	218.77
4	125	Jodhpur-Shaitrawa-Dechhu-Pokaran,Dechhu-Pokaran	176.33	11.33
5	968	Bhadasar-Sarkaritala (Distt. Jaisalmer) Jaisalmer	67.95	67.95

Table No. 2: State Highway Passing through Jaisalmer District (4)

S.No.	State Highway (SHW) no.	Road Connectivity	Total Length of SHW (in Kms)	Length in Jaisalmer (in Kms.)
1	40	Gadara road to Nachana via Pokharan, Barmer, Chawa, Baytoo, Kanod, Phalsoond, Bhaniyana, Pokaran.	258	155
2	65	Sheo (NH-15) to Shergarh via Bhiyad, Barnawa Jagger, Patodi, Phalsoond.	88	35
3	94	Hanumangarh to Ramgarh via Pilibanga, Suratgarh, Anupgarh, Gharsana, Rawala, Khajuwala, Dantor, Godu, Sutharwala Pethewala	417.47	188

b. Rail Transport: Attractive to both local and foreign travelers is the Jaisalmer Railway Station, a well-known station on the North-Western railway network. The Palace on Wheels luxury train contributes to the region's attraction for rail tourism by providing a first-rate travel experience.

c. Air Transport: Despite its modest size, the Jaisalmer Airport is an essential hub for domestic air travel. Tourists do, however, face difficulties due to seasonal airline schedules and restricted connectivity, particularly during high travel seasons. The closest airport to Jaisalmer, also known as the Golden City, is Jodhpur Airport. The airport has good connectivity with Delhi, Bangalore, and Mumbai, and it is located about 280 km from the city. From each of these cities (5), Air India and Jet Airways flights operate. However, because of the distance between the airport and the city, many do not think that flying is the ideal way to go to Jaisalmer. Travelers can readily use taxi and bus services to get to Jaisalmer after arriving at the airport.

Impact of Transport on Tourism development:

i. Accessibility and Connectivity:

Enough transportation must be efficient in order for tourism to grow. The transit system plays an important role in increasing Jaisalmer's accessibility and in attracting more tourists.

The number of domestic tourists visiting Jaisalmer has shown a consistent upward trend, with the exception of 2020, according to the Rajasthan Tourism Department's Annual Progress Report. Meanwhile, the number of foreign tourists visiting Jaisalmer has also shown a consistent upward trend, with the exception of 2020 and 2021 due to the corona pandemic. The number of visitors to Jaisalmer is shown in Table No. 3.

Table no. 3: No. of Tourist visitors in Jaisalmer District (6, 7 & 8)

S. No.	Year	No. of Tourist	
		Domestic	Foreign
1	2023	8607976	48094
2	2022	6348747	29131
3	2021	326176	1680
4	2020	144899	26014
5	2019	345524	91019

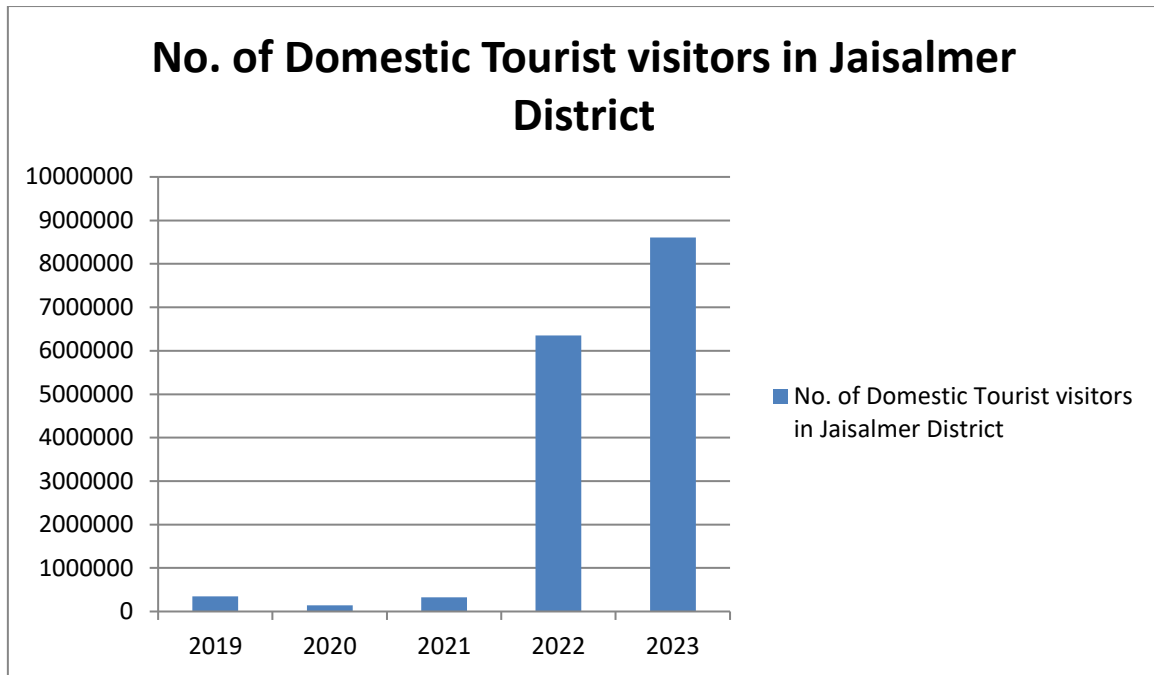


Fig. 1. No. of Domestic Tourist visitors in Jaisalmer District

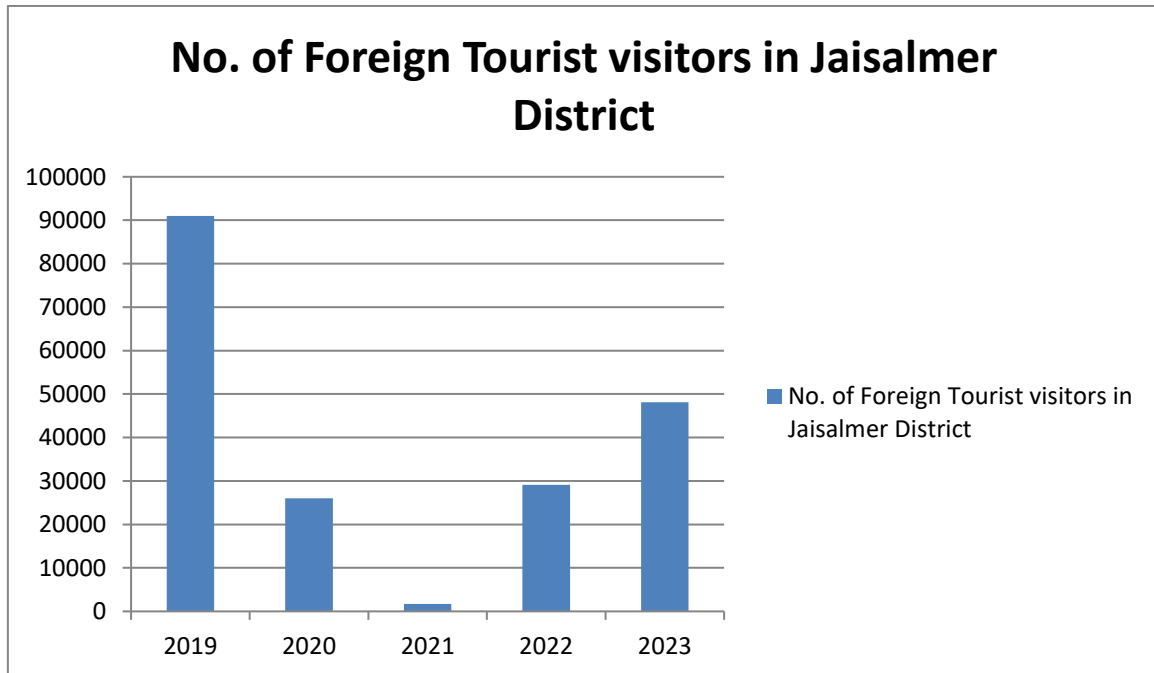


Fig. 2. No. of Foreign Tourist visitors in Jaisalmer District

ii. Socio-Economic Implications: The socioeconomic benefits, such as the creation of jobs and income, are increased by a strong transport infrastructure. Currently, Jaisalmer has seen a large number of new hotel developments in easily accessible areas which directly boosts the socioeconomic benefits.

iii. New kinds of Tourism- The influence of transportation has led to the development of many new kinds of tourism, including business, incentive, eco-tourism, wildlife, spiritual, rural/village, sports, social, and shopping tourism.

iii. Sustainable Transport Solutions: In an effort to reduce the negative environmental effects of tourism in Jaisalmer, eco-friendly transit options including electric cars and bicycles have just entered the tourism framework.

iv. Future Directions: Policymakers and interested parties are advised to enhance Jaisalmer's transport infrastructure even more in order to promote the growth of sustainable tourism.

Conclusion

Building a strong transport infrastructure is essential to Jaisalmer's tourism industry's long-term viability. An effective transport network may help Jaisalmer realise its full potential as a top tourist destination while protecting its natural and cultural legacy. It can do this by boosting accessibility, enhancing visitor experiences, and promoting socioeconomic growth. To secure the long-term viability of Jaisalmer's tourism sector, stakeholders must work together and give top priority to funding transport initiatives that adhere to the values of sustainability and inclusivity.

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