

## TOURISM INDUSTRY IN INDIA: AUGMENTATION AND COLLISION

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### Abstract

India offers myriad flavours mingling in the steam of a country coming of age. Teeming with over a billion people who voice over a million concerns in 1500 different languages, India is where people live with variety, thrive on diversity and are too familiar with largeness to let it boggle them. Mud huts and mansions face off across city streets and lurid luxury and limp living are inhabitants of the same lane. Just like in the 'masala' box in every Indian kitchen, measures of Calm and "Kaam" (work) craft the people of India. In this beautiful and bountiful land that is India, events, experiences and sensations heap themselves on the tourist at every step.

**Key words:** Myriad, Thrive on diversity and Calm and Kaam.

### Introduction

Over the decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Tourism has become a thriving global industry with the power to shape developing countries in both positive and negative ways. No doubt it has become the fourth largest industry in the global economy. Similarly, in developing countries like India tourism has become one of the major sectors of the economy, contributing to a large proportion of the National Income and generating huge employment opportunities. It has become the fastest growing service industry in the country with great potentials for its further expansion and diversification. However, there are pros and cons involved with the development of tourism industry in the country.

### Augmentation of Tourism in India

#### Early Augmentation

The first conscious and organized efforts to promote tourism in India were made in 1945 when a committee was set up by the Government under the Chairmanship of Sir John Sargent, the then Educational Adviser to the Government of India (Krishna, A.G., 1993). Thereafter, the development of tourism was taken up in a planned manner in 1956 coinciding with the Second Five Year Plan. The approach has evolved from isolated planning of single unit facilities in the Second and Third Five Year Plans. The Sixth Plan marked the beginning of a new era when tourism began to be considered a major instrument for social integration and economic development. But it was only after the 80's that tourism activity gained momentum. The Government took several significant steps. A National Policy on

tourism was announced in 1982. Later in 1988, the National Committee on Tourism formulated a comprehensive plan for achieving a sustainable growth in tourism. In 1992, a National Action Plan was prepared and in 1996 the National Strategy for Promotion of Tourism was drafted. In 1997, the New Tourism Policy recognizes the roles of Central and State governments, public sector undertakings and the private sector in the development of tourism were. The need for involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions, local bodies, non-governmental organizations and the local youth in the creation of tourism facilities has also been recognized.

#### **Present Situation of Tourism in India**

Today tourism is the largest service industry in India, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and providing 8.78% of the total employment. India witnesses more than 5 million annual foreign tourist arrivals and 562 million domestic tourism visits. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. The Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of tourism in India and maintains the "Incredible India" campaign.

#### **Future of Tourism in India**

According to **World Travel and Tourism Council**, India will be a tourism hotspot from 2009-2018, having the highest 10-year growth potential. As per the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2009 by the World Economic Forum, India is ranked 11th in the Asia Pacific region and 62nd overall, moving up three places on the list of the world's attractive destinations. It is ranked the 14th best tourist destination for its natural resources and 24th for its cultural resources, with many World Heritage Sites, both natural and cultural, rich fauna, and strong creative industries in the country. India also bagged 37th rank for its air transport network. The India travel and tourism industry ranked 5th in the long-term (10-year) growth and is expected to be the second largest employer in the world by 2019. The 2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi are expected to significantly boost tourism in India further. Moreover, India has been ranked the "**best country brand for value-for-money**" in the Country Brand Index (CBI) survey conducted by Future Brand, a leading global brand consultancy. India also claimed the second place in CBI's "best country brand for history", as well as appears among the top 5 in the best country brand for authenticity and art & culture, and the fourth best new country for business. India made it to the list of "rising stars" or the countries that are likely to become major tourist destinations in the next five years, led by the United Arab Emirates, China, and Vietnam.

#### **Tourist Attractions in India**

India is a country known for its lavish treatment to all visitors, no matter where they come from. Its visitor-friendly traditions, varied life styles and cultural heritage and colourful fairs and festivals held abiding attractions for the tourists. The other attractions include beautiful beaches, forests and wild life and landscapes for eco-tourism; snow, river and mountain peaks for adventure tourism; technological parks and science museums for

science tourism; centres of pilgrimage for spiritual tourism; heritage, trains and hotels for heritage tourism. Yoga, ayurveda and natural health resorts and hill stations also attract tourists. The Indian handicrafts particularly, jewellery, carpets, leather goods, ivory and brass work are the main shopping items of foreign tourists. It is estimated through survey that nearly forty per cent of the tourist expenditure on shopping is spent on such items. Despite the economic slowdown, medical tourism in India is the fastest growing segment of tourism industry, according to the market research report “Booming Medical Tourism in India”. The report adds that India offers a great potential in the medical tourism industry. Factors such as low cost, scale and range of treatments provided in the country add to its attractiveness as a medical tourism destination.

#### **Initiatives to Heighten Tourism**

Some of the recent initiatives taken by the Government to boost tourism include grant of export house status to the tourism sector and incentives for promoting private investment in the form of Income Tax exemptions, interest subsidy and reduced import duty. The hotel and tourism-related industry has been declared a high priority industry for foreign investment which entails automatic approval of direct investment up to 51 per cent of foreign equity and allowing 100 per cent non-resident Indian investment and simplifying rules regarding the grant of approval to travel agents, tour operators and tourist transport operators. The first-ever Indian Tourism Day was celebrated on January 25, 1998. The Year 1999 was celebrated as Explore India Millennium Year by presenting a spectacular tableau on the cultural heritage of India at the Republic Day Parade and organising India Tourism Expo in New Delhi and Khajuraho. Moreover, the campaign ‘Visit India Year 2009’ was launched at the International Tourism Exchange in Berlin, aimed to project India as an attractive destination for holidaymakers. The government joined hands with leading airlines, hoteliers, holiday resorts and tour operators, and offered them a wide range of incentives and bonuses during the period between April and December, 2009.

#### **Future Prospects**

According to the latest Tourism Satellite Accounting (TSA) research, released by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and its strategic partner Oxford Economics in March 2009: The demand for travel and tourism in India is expected to grow by 8.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019 and will place India at the third position in the world. India’s travel and tourism sector is expected to be the second largest employer in the world, employing 40,037,000 by 2019. Capital investment in India’s travel and tourism sector is expected to grow at 8.8 per cent between 2010 and 2019. The report forecasts India to get capital investment worth US\$ 94.5 billion in the travel and tourism sector in 2019. India is projected to become the fifth fastest growing business travel destination from 2010-2019 with an estimated real growth rate of 7.6 per cent.

#### **Guide Training Programme**

A large number of tourists visit Tamil Nadu throughout the year to see and enjoy the temples, beautiful beaches, wildlife sanctuaries, fascinating falls, hill stations, etc.

Guides play an important role in tourism promotion. They are responsible for projecting the right image of the country, giving factual information, caring for the safety of the tourists and ensuring their pleasant stay. Tamil Nadu Tourism in co-ordination with the Anna Institute of Management, Chennai, has been conducting Guide Training Programmes for the unemployed youth and retired Govt. officials. The Rural Development Department has sanctioned Rs.22.10 lakhs for giving Guide training to 400 candidates. The period of training is 10 days, apart from a three day field visit. At the first instance during 2008-2009, 133 persons were given Guide training. The Guide training was also given to 14 retired Government officials and orientation training has been given to 64 persons, who are already trained. Guide Identity cards have also been given. Tourism being essentially hospitality oriented industry, it becomes necessary to inject professionalism in various fields like reception, housekeeping, and interior decoration and catering. Tamil Nadu has two Government Catering Institutes.

#### **Tourist Friendly Auto Rickshaw**

'Tourist Friendly Autos', a novel scheme, was launched in the State during the year 2007-2008. The auto drivers who were interested in becoming a part of the Tourist Friendly Auto System were enlisted after verifying their antecedents with the Police and the Regional Transport Offices. The qualified drivers were given training on tourist spots, and social skills like communication, body language and related subjects. Tourist maps and brochures are given to them for distribution to the tourists. 'Tourist Friendly Autos' campaign was launched in Chennai with 39 autorickshaws and at Kanniyakumari with 18 autorickshaws in the first phase. In the second phase, 24 additional autorickshaws joined the 'Tourist Friendly Autos' scheme in Chennai. In the third phase, 25 numbers in Chennai, 28 autorickshaws at Tirunelveli (Courtallam Region) and 7 autorickshaws at Madurai joined. Under this scheme, autorickshaws enrolled in the system were got painted with the photographs of local tourist spots with the concurrence of the Transport Department.

#### **Impact of Tourism in India**

Tourism industry in India has several positive and negative impacts on the economy and society. These impacts are highlighted below.

##### **Positive Impacts**

1. **Generating Income and Employment:** Tourism in India has emerged as an instrument of income and employment generation, poverty alleviation and sustainable human development. It contributes 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India. Almost 20 million people are now working in the India's tourism industry.
2. **Source of Foreign Exchange Earnings:** Tourism is an important source of foreign exchange earnings in India. This has favourable impact on the balance of payment of the country. The tourism industry in India generated about US\$100 billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate.

3. Preservation of National Heritage and Environment: Tourism helps preserve several places which are of historical importance by declaring them as heritage sites. For instance, the Taj Mahal, the Qutab Minar, Ajanta and Ellora temples, etc, would have been decayed and destroyed had it not been for the efforts taken by Tourism Department to preserve them. Likewise, tourism also helps in conserving the natural habitats of many endangered species.
4. Developing Infrastructure: Tourism tends to encourage the development of multiple-use infrastructure that benefits the host community, including various means of transports, health care facilities, and sports centers, in addition to the hotels and high-end restaurants that cater to foreign visitors. The development of infrastructure has in turn induced the development of other directly productive activities.

#### Negative Impacts

1. Undesirable Social and Cultural Change: Tourism sometimes led to the destruction of the social fabric of a community. The more tourists coming into a place, the more the perceived risk of that place losing its identity. A good example is Goa. From the late 60's to the early 80's when the Hippy culture was at its height, Goa was a haven for such hippies. Here they came in thousands and changed the whole culture of the state leading to a rise in the use of drugs, prostitution and human trafficking. This had a ripple effect on the country.
2. Increase Tension and Hostility: Tourism can increase tension, hostility, and suspicion between the tourists and the local communities when there is no respect and understanding for each other's culture and way of life. This may further lead to violence and other crimes committed against the tourists. The recent crime committed against Russian tourist in Goa is a case in point.
3. Creating a Sense of Antipathy: Tourism brought little benefit to the local community. In most all-inclusive package tours more than 80% of travelers' fees go to the airlines, hotels and other international companies, not to local businessmen and workers. Moreover, large hotel chain restaurants often import food to satisfy foreign visitors and rarely employ local staff for senior management positions, preventing local farmers and workers from reaping the benefit of their presence. This has often created a sense of antipathy towards the tourists and the government.

#### Environmental Impact of Tourism in India

The tourism industry in India can have several positive and negative impacts on the environment which are discuss below.

#### Positive Impacts

1. Direct Financial Contributions. Tourism can contribute directly to the conservation of sensitive areas and habitat. Revenue from park-entrance fees and similar sources can be allocated specifically to pay for the protection and management of environmentally sensitive areas. Special fees for park operations or conservation activities can be collected from tourists or tour operators.

2. Contributions to Government Revenues. The Indian government through the tourism department also collect money in more far-reaching and indirect ways that are not linked to specific parks or conservation areas. User fees, income taxes, taxes on sales or rental of recreation equipment, and license fees for activities such as rafting and fishing can provide governments with the funds needed to manage natural resources. Such funds can be used for overall conservation programs and activities, such as park ranger salaries and park maintenance.
3. Improved Environmental Management and Planning. Sound environmental management of tourism facilities and especially hotels can increase the benefits to natural environment. By planning early for tourism development, damaging and expensive mistakes can be prevented, avoiding the gradual deterioration of environmental assets significant to tourism. The development of tourism has moved the Indian government towards this direction leading to improved environmental management.

### **Negative Impacts**

**1. Depletion of Natural Resources:** Tourism development can put pressure on natural resources when it increases consumption in areas where resources are already scarce.

(i) Water resources: Water, especially fresh water, is one of the most critical natural resources. The tourism industry generally overuses water resources for hotels, swimming pools, golf courses and personal use of water by tourists. This can result in water shortages and degradation of water supplies, as well as generating a greater volume of waste water. In dryer regions like Rajasthan, the issue of water scarcity is of particular concern.

(ii) Local resources: Tourism can create great pressure on local resources like energy, food, and other raw materials that may already be in short supply. Greater extraction and transport of these resources exacerbates the physical impacts associated with their exploitation. Because of the seasonal character of the industry, many destinations have ten times more inhabitants in the high season as in the low season. A high demand is placed upon these resources to meet the high expectations tourists often have (proper heating, hot water, etc.).

(iii) Land degradation: Important land resources include minerals, fossil fuels, fertile soil, forests, wetland and wildlife. Increased construction of tourism and recreational facilities has increased the pressure on these resources and on scenic landscapes. Direct impact on natural resources, both renewable and nonrenewable, in the provision of tourist facilities is caused by the use of land for accommodation and other infrastructure provision, and the use of building materials. Forests often suffer negative impacts of tourism in the form of deforestation caused by fuel wood collection and land clearing e.g. the trekking in the Himalayan region, Sikkim and Assam.

### **2. Pollution**

Tourism can cause the same forms of pollution as any other industry: air emissions, noise, solid waste and littering, releases of sewage, oil and chemicals, even architectural/visual pollution.

i) Air and Noise Pollution: Transport by air, road, and rail is continuously increasing in response to the rising number of tourist activities in India. Transport emissions and emissions from energy production and use are linked to acid rain, global warming and photochemical pollution. Air pollution from tourist transportation has impacts on the global level, especially from carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions related to transportation energy use. And it can contribute to severe local air pollution. Some of these impacts are quite specific to tourist activities where the sites are in remote areas like Ajanta and Ellora temples. For example, tour buses often leave their motors running for hours while the tourists go out for an excursion because they want to return to a comfortably air-conditioned bus. Noise pollution from airplanes, cars, and buses, as well as recreational vehicles is an ever-growing problem of modern life. In addition to causing annoyance, stress, and even hearing loss for humans, it causes distress to wildlife, especially in sensitive areas.

(ii) Solid waste and littering: In areas with high concentrations of tourist activities and appealing natural attractions, waste disposal is a serious problem and improper disposal can be a major despoiler of the natural environment - rivers, scenic areas, and roadsides. In mountain areas of the Himalayas and Darjeeling, trekking tourists generate a great deal of waste. Tourists on expedition leave behind their garbage, oxygen cylinders and even camping equipment. Such practices degrade the environment particularly in remote areas because they have few garbage collection or disposal facilities.

### **3. Destruction and Alteration of Ecosystem**

An ecosystem is a geographic area including all the living organisms (people, plants, animals, and micro-organisms), their physical surroundings (such as soil, water, and air), and the natural cycles that sustain them. Attractive landscape sites, such as sandy beaches in Goa, Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamil Nadu; lakes, riversides, and mountain tops and slopes, are often transitional zones, characterized by species-rich ecosystems. The threats to and pressures on these ecosystems are often severe because such places are very attractive to both tourists and developers.

### **Conclusion**

Tourism industry in India is growing and it has vast potential for generating employment and earning large amount of foreign exchange besides giving a fillip to the country's overall economic and social development. But much more remains to be done. Eco-tourism needs to be promoted so that tourism in India helps in preserving and sustaining the diversity of the India's natural and cultural environments. Tourism in India should be developed in such a way that it accommodates and entertains visitors in a way that is minimally intrusive or destructive to the environment and sustains & supports the native cultures in the locations it is operating in. Moreover, since tourism is a multi-dimensional activity, and basically a service industry, it would be necessary that all wings of the Central and State governments, private sector and voluntary organizations become active partners in the Endeavour to attain sustainable growth in tourism if India is to become a world player in the tourism industry.

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