



Indian Tourism: A Journey for Incredible India

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INTRODUCTION:

Indian Tourism has the ability to bring people from different countries into contact with our people, which in turn fosters a better understanding and mutual sympathy. Tourism has created numerous jobs for local people. By promoting tourism in unexplored parts of India we can bring more money to the exchequer. Indian tourism is one of the biggest foreign currency earning industries in India. India presents a colorful contrasting picture to the tourists. Embracing modernity while preserving rich traditions, India has become a major tourist destination. The Sanskrit adage "athithi devo bhava" dictates the respect granted to guests in India. A guest is welcome in our home and hears cheerful gratitude.

India, the current tourism hot spot, is often referred to as 'Destination of the Millennium' and 'Land of all seasons'. A vast country with immense natural beauty, cultural and ethnic diversity, India presents a colourful contrasting picture to the tourists. Embracing modernity while preserving rich traditions, India has become a major tourist destination.

India is the current tourism hot spot. The other epithets used while referring to the nation include "Destination of the Millennium" and "Land of All Seasons". Spanning an area of 3,287,263 square kilometers, India is a vast country and includes dry desert areas, evergreen forests, snowy Himalayas, a long coast and fertile plains. The natural beauty and cultural diversity of the place echoes a rich tradition. India flaunts with equal grandeur bays and

beaches, deserts and mountains, enigmatic green valleys and backwaters. There exists in India a comfortable juxtaposition of contrast: the existence of bustling cities and swanky malls, emergence of nuclear families but a reluctance to let go of the joint family system, a rush to embrace modernity yet a firm resolve to preserve traditions: a destination for both Ayurveda and modern medical tourism; bustling communities and indigenous tribes.

India has a rich heritage and culture of warm hospitality. In India it is believed that honouring guests equals to honouring God. A guest is welcomed into our home and hears cheerful gratitude. The Sanskrit adage 'athithi devo bhava' dictates the respect granted to guests in India. This wonderful tradition of our country has become the unique selling point of the modern

tourism industry. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has pioneered an initiative that will help tap into the full potential of tourism in India. Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has introduced "Atithi Devo Bhavah Program"- a nation wide campaign that aims at sensitizing key stakeholders towards tourists, through a process of training and orientation. The endeavour is to boost tourism in India, which in turn would act as a catalyst for India's economic growth.

The 'Incredible India' Campaign has been launched to create awareness about the effects of tourism and sensitizing people about preservation of our rich heritage and culture, cleanliness and warm hospitality. It also re-instills a sense of responsibility towards tourists and reinforces the confidence of foreign tourists towards India as a preferred holiday destination.

Tourism in India is the largest service industry, with a contribution of 6.23% to the national GDP and 8.78% of the total employment in India witnesses more than 5.5 million annual foreign tourist arrivals [1] and 740 million domestic tourism visits. The tourism industry in India generated about 100 US\$ billion in 2008 and that is expected to increase to US\$275.5 billion by 2018 at a 9.4% annual growth rate. [2] In the year 2010, 17.9 million foreign tourists visited India. Majority of foreign tourists come from USA and UK.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan are the top 5 states to receive inbound tourists. [3] Domestic tourism in the same year was massive at 740 million. Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra received the big share of these visitors. [4][5] Ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency to formulate national policies and programmes for the development and promotion of tourism. In the process, the Ministry consults and collaborates with other stakeholders in the sector including various central Ministries/agencies, the State Governments/agencies, the State Government/Union Territories and the representatives of the private sector. Concerted efforts are being made to promote new forms of tourism such as rural, cruise, medical and eco-tourism. [6] The ministry of Tourism is the nodal agency for the development and promotion of tourism in India and maintains the Incredible India campaign.

According to World Travel and Tourism Council, India will be a tourism hotspot from 2009-2018, [7] having the highest 10-year growth potential. [8]

The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2007 ranked tourism in India 6th in terms of price competitiveness and 39th in terms of safety and security. [9] Despite short and medium-term setbacks, such as shortage of hotel rooms. [10] Tourism revenues are expected to surge by 42% from 2007 to

2017. [11] India's 5,000 years of history, its length, breadth and the variety of geographic features make it tourism basket large and varied. It presents heritage and cultural tourism along with medical, business and sports tourism. India has a growing medical tourism sector. The 2010 Commonwealth games in Delhi were expected to significantly boost tourism in India.

Several hill station served as summer capitals of Indian provinces, princely states, or, in the case of Shimla, of British India itself. Since Indian Independence, the role of these hill stations as summer capitals has largely ended, but many hill stations remain popular summer resorts. Most famous hill stations are:

Mount abu, Rajasthan, Vindhya Range, Uttar Pradesh, Pachmarhi, Madhya Pradesh- It is also known as The Queen of Satpura, Gulmarg, Srinagar and Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, Shillong in Meghalaya, Darjeeling in West Bengal, Shimla, Kullu in Himanchal Pradesh, Nainital in UttaraKhand, Gangtok in Sikkim, Mussoorie in Uttarakhand, Manali in Himanchal Pradesh, Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, Mahabaleshwar in Maharashtra, Haflong in Assam, Araku in Kerala, Munnar in Kerala, Ooty, Yercaud and Kodaikanal in Tamil Nadu.

In addition to the bustling hill stations and summer capitals of yore,

there are several serene and peaceful nature retreats and places of interest to visit for a nature lover. These range from the stunning moonscapes of Leh and Ladhak, to small, exclusive nature retreats such as Dunagiri, Binsar, Mukteshwar in the Himalayas, to rolling vistas of Western Ghats to numerous private retreats in the rolling hills of Kerala.

India is home to several well known large mammals including the Asian Elephant, Bengal Tiger, Asiatic Lion, Leopard and Indian Rhinoceros, often engrained culturally and religiously often being associated with deities. Other well known large Indian mammals include ungulates such as the domestic Asian water buffalo, wild Asian water buffalo, Nilgai, Gaur and several species of deer and antelope. Some members of the dog family such as the Indian Wolf, Bengal Fox, Golden Jackal and the Dhole or Wild Dogs are also widely distributed. It is also home to the Striped Hyaena, Macaques, Langurs and Mongoose species.

Some well known national wildlife sanctuaries include Bharatpur, Corbett, Kanha, Kaziranga, Periyar, Ranthambore, Manas and Sariska.

The world's largest mangrove forest Sundarbans is located in southern West Bengal. The Kaziranga National Park, manas National parks, Sundarbans and Keoladeo National Park are UNESCO word Heritage Site.

Indian tourism has flourished over the last year because many new facilities have been provided to the tourists-Indians as well as foreigners. Easy access to tourist spots and professional management can ensure still better results.

Number of Tourists over the last five years

Years ago- Numbers of Tourists (in thousands)

	Indians	Foreigners
5 Years ago	25	37
4 Years ago	31	37
3 Years ago	26	50
2 Years ago	21	55
1 Years ago	27	59
This year's	36	90

There has been a steady increases in the number in the foreign tourists over the years during it stood at 37000 for the first two years and then rose 33% and stood at 50,000 the sustained progress during the next two years recordings 55,000 and 59,000 respectively. However, this year tourism has made spectacular progress as the number tourist has shown more than 50% increase over the previous year. Number of domestic tourist has been fluctuating up and down from 25,000 five years ago it increased by almost 25,000 and touched the figure of 31000 the next year however, in the following year it came down to 26,000 and fell further to 21,000. One year ago the number of tourist looked up and went to 27,000. This year

the number of domestic visitor has touched the peak recording 36000 to be precise.

Some twenty years back, India has an image of a country of 'Snake charmers and saints'. But now, thanks to tourism boost, this image has changed to a modern and civilised state. people in foreign lands now know more about India. Their curiosity about India brings them to visit our country. This in turn boosts tourism in India, which is helpful for India's economic growth. At the same time ghousands of jobs created by tourism motivates rural people to remain in their locality. It also brings peace and harmony among people because when there is money to satisfy one's needs, there is no quarrel. Tourism has played a vital role in serveral Indian states in improving the standard of living of the people. But on the other hand uncontrolled tourisms has created cultural and environmental havocs. Some destinations, unknown or lesser known until recently, are now bustling with people and activities. Places like Shimla and Nainital are no longer as attractive as they used to be Because oftourism boost these and many other cities are unable to bear the burden to influx of to tourists. That has resulted in degradation of forests in and around these place, and created environmental and ecological destructions. The world famous Dal Lake in Kashmir now looks a dirty pond filled with garbage thrown

in it by millions of visiting tourists.

Indian tourism is one of the biggest foreign currency earning industries in India. By promoting tourism in unexplored parts of India we can bring more money to the exchequer. Tourism has created numerous jobs for local people. It has the ability to bring people from different countries into contact with our people, which in them fosters a better

understanding and mutual sympathy.

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