



## Experiencing India's Diverse Tourism Offerings

This editorial is based on [“Unlocking the potential of hospitality”](#) which was published in Financial Express on 06/01/2023. It talks about the Tourism Sector in India and related issues.

**For Prelims:** Presidency of G20, Cultural Exchange, Cultural Heritage Sites, Eco-tourism, Himalayan regions, Unsustainable tourism, Pollution, Puri in Odisha, Hampi in Karnataka, Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Draft National Tourism Policy 2022, Dekho Apna Desh Initiative, Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, Public-private partnerships.

**For Mains:** Significance of the Tourism Sector in India, Challenges Related to the Tourism Sector in India, Recent Initiatives Related to Tourism in India.

**Tourism** is seen as a major driving force for any economy over the world. It has a multiplier effect on associated industries like [hospitality](#). The spillover of earnings from tourism into other industries does not only improve the **economic conditions** but also **enhances standards of living of the local population**.

But there are several challenges related to the tourism sector in India, like **infrastructural deficit, unsustainability, climate change and pollution**.

While India takes on the [presidency of the G20](#) and starts preparing for the **summit in 2023**, positioning the country as a safe, **tourist-friendly destination** hinges on how the government can work together with the industry and provide a **world-class experience** to visiting dignitaries.

### What is the Significance of the Tourism Sector in India?

- **Economic Benefits:** Tourism generates **revenue through the sale of goods and services to tourists**, such as accommodation, transport, and heritage attractions.
  - This can **stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities** in the tourism sector and related industries.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Tourism provides an opportunity for [cultural exchange](#), as visitors from different parts of the world can learn about and experience India's diverse cultures and traditions.
- **Preservation of Cultural Heritage:** Tourism can also help to preserve [cultural heritage sites](#), such as **temples, forts, and palaces, by providing the funds needed for their maintenance and restoration**.
- **Environmental Benefits:** In some cases, tourism can also have environmental benefits, such as through the **development of [eco-tourism](#) initiatives** that promote the conservation of natural areas.
- **Social Benefits:** Tourism can also bring social benefits to local communities, such as through the creation of **employment opportunities** and the **provision of social infrastructure, such as**

schools and healthcare facilities.

## What are the Challenges Related to the Tourism Sector in India?

- **Safety and Security Issues:** India has faced challenges with regard to the **safety and security of tourists**, particularly in certain areas of the country.
  - This can **deter tourists from visiting certain destinations** and can also impact the overall perception of India as a tourist destination.
- **Lack of Human Resource:** Since **tourism is a labour-intensive industry**, practical training is of utmost importance. However, as the **tourism sector in India has grown, the availability of trained professionals has not kept pace**.
  - Due to a **lack of multilingual trained guides** and an inadequate understanding of the benefits and responsibilities associated with tourism among locals, the sector's growth is restricted.
- **Unsustainable Tourism:** In India, especially in the **Himalayan regions**, where resources are already scarce, **unsustainable tourism** often puts pressure on natural resources through overconsumption of natural resources.
  - Additionally, **unsustainable tourism affects local land use**, causing soil erosion, **increased pollution**, and the destruction of endangered species' habitats.
- **Lack of Connectivity:** There are many places in India that remain unexplored because of inadequate surveys, infrastructure, and connectivity, resulting in **lukewarm attitudes towards domestic travel**.
  - As an example, despite the **Northeast's breathtaking natural beauty**, it is not often **included in domestic or international tourists' travel plans** because of a **lack of connectivity** with the rest of the country as well as a lack of infrastructure and necessary facilities.
- **Pollution and Climate Change:** Our major **tourist sites (heritage sites)** are also affected by pollution. India still struggles to protect its wonder, **Taj Mahal**, from pollution. There have been floods in India in recent years, including in places where **heritage sites are located, as a result of climate change**.
  - Example: **Puri in Odisha** and **Hampi in Karnataka**

## What are the Recent Initiatives Related to Tourism in India?

- [Swadesh Darshan Scheme](#)
- [Draft National Tourism Policy 2022](#)
- [Dekho Apna Desh Initiative](#)
- [Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat](#)

## What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Tourism Infrastructure Development:** Investing in the development of infrastructure, such as **roads, airports, and hotels**, would make it easier for tourists to access and travel around different parts of the country.
  - This could be done through **public-private partnerships** or through government investment.
- **Focusing on Safety and Security:** Improving safety and security for tourists is essential for the growth of the tourism sector in India.
  - This could be achieved through measures such as the **deployment of tourism police, the implementation of security protocols at tourist attractions**, and the promotion of safe travel practices.
- **Sustainable Tourism:** To address the issue of **overcrowding and the impact on the environment**, the tourism industry could focus on promoting sustainable tourism practices.
  - This could include initiatives such as promoting **off-season travel, supporting local businesses**, and preserving natural and cultural heritage sites.
- **Visa Simplification:** Streamlining the visa application process and making it more **accessible**

**for foreign tourists would encourage more people to visit India.**

- This could be done through the implementation of online visa systems and the expansion of **visa-on-arrival programs**.

▪ **Cultural Sensitivity Training:** Providing **cultural sensitivity training for tourists** and tourism industry professionals could help to **reduce misunderstandings and promote respect for local cultures and traditions**.

- This could be done through the **development of educational materials** and the inclusion of cultural sensitivity training in tourism industry training programs.

▪ **Creating a Unified Tourism Portal:** A rigorous **market research and evaluation exercise can be conducted in order to identify desired tourist destinations** across the nation.

- **It can be followed by developing a digital unified system (promoting the essence of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat)**, to map these places and promote them through social media.

▪ **Opportunity for India:** Considering **India's rich heritage and culture**, an unmatched diversity of **cuisine tourism** can be an effective tool for enhancing India's soft power and attracting foreign revenue. India's philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** gives it an unwavering belief in multilateralism.

- Recent **Dharamshala Declaration** recognizes India's potential for supporting **global tourism and also promoting domestic tourism**.

### **Drishti Mains Question**

Tourism has the potential to be a key driver of economic growth and development in India, but it also has the potential to create negative impacts on the environment and local communities. Discuss.

## **UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

### **Mains**

**Q.1** How can the mountain ecosystem be restored from the negative impact of development initiatives and tourism? **(2019)**

**Q.2** The states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are reaching the limits of their ecological carrying capacity due to tourism. Critically evaluate. **(2015)**

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