

Indian Tourism

Indian tourism has come of age. It is time that it moves forward in the right direction. Analysis of authors in the book allows for a deeper, objective perspective based on what possible competitors in the world are doing – a must-read for tourism practitioners and students.

*G Kamala Vardhana Rao
Director-General, Ministry of Tourism, Govt of India*

I appreciate the authors for coming up with such a scholarly contribution to a pertinent thematic segment of Indian tourism. Lately, more and more diasporic communities visit their homelands, perhaps reroot their identities. Although different generations of the Indian diaspora have different reasons for travelling to India, which needs to explore. Lucid and topical, this book will be useful for students and scholars not only in the tourism sector but also for political studies, sociology, diaspora studies and international relations.

*Sat Prakash Bansal
Professor of Tourism and Vice-Chancellor,
Central University of Himachal Pradesh, India*

Indian tourism has come of age, and it is time that it is researched and analysed in depth to develop in the right direction. The book offers an in-depth analysis of Indian tourism and provides a comprehensive perspective based on global competitiveness. The Editors should be congratulated for providing a dynamic overview of tourism in India. The book is a must-read for tourism students, academics, researchers and professionals interested in Indian tourism.

*Dimitrios Buhalis
Professor, Bournemouth University Business School;
Visiting Professor at the School of Hospitality and Tourism
Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University*

It is delightful reading this book on Indian tourism. Anyone interested in Indian tourism must read this book to get insight into how global tourism academics look at Indian tourism. Contributors have made an objective analysis. In this book, the

Editors have created content that any academic on Indian tourism would like to discuss in their class. This book presents an outside view of tourism dynamics in India as understood by global Indo-centric researchers.

Rajiv Mehra
President, Indian Association of Tour Operators

The external narrative is essential to get an insight into the functioning of the Indian Tourism System, and this collection fills the void on it. The selection of a wide array of scholarly works is appreciable and would be valuable for researchers and practitioners in the field. I congratulate the team on the book.

Manjula Chaudhary
Professor of Tourism and Dean,
Academic Affairs, Kurukshetra University;
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Indian Tourism: Diaspora Perspectives

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Preface

India is one of the fastest emerging tourist destinations in the world. Marketed as 'Incredible India' by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the country is known for its diversity, cultural values, spirituality and delightful cuisines. The tourism and hospitality sector in the Indian subcontinent has witnessed unprecedented growth, thanks to governmental intervention in marketing and promoting the country as a tourist destination. According to the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, the foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) were 10.89 million in 2019, indicating a growth of 3.2% compared to 2018. Likewise, the Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) during 2019 were US\$ 29.96 billion with a growth rate of 4.8% compared to the previous year. Undoubtedly, the increased growth unleashed employment opportunities for millions of Indians. Moreover, the promising role of tourism and hospitality is backed by several enabling initiatives like e-visa facility, cleanliness drive, smart city initiative, leveraging adoption of heritage sites to private stakeholders for better management and creating infrastructure along tourist circuits to name a few. But does an increase in tourist footfalls and introducing new schemes indicate the long-term growth of the sector?

India as a tourist destination has fascinated many tourists, researchers and investors primarily because of its varied tourism products. The perspective of looking at India differs by different sectors of society. One of those sectors is the Indian diaspora. During the colonial period, Indians migrated initially to South Africa, Fiji, the Caribbean and Southeast Asia owing to the enormous demand for cheap labour in these regions. However, when the Britishers abolished slavery in the early twentieth century, migrations of skilled and semi-skilled personnel from India became a common phenomenon. Millions of Indians migrated from India to other parts of the world in search of better jobs, increased standard of living and to create a better future for their descendants. According to official reports, the Indian diaspora is present in all continents and regions on the planet – from the Caribbean islands to the Americas, Europe, Gulf countries, South-east Asia and New Zealand. As per the official statistics, the Indian diaspora currently stands at a whopping number of 20 million. Despite living away from their homeland, Indian diasporas are culturally connected to India and often visit the country for several reasons. Some of these are meeting their extended families, attending family functions, transferring property rights, making investments and involving in charitable works and vacations.

Recently, the Government of India lauded the Indian diaspora for their significant contributions in different domains all over the world. Despite adapting to the culture of the foreign land, their individuality is reflected in their work and thoughts. Considering the international tourist arrivals in the country, diaspora forms a considerable part of the overall numbers. Based on the authors' experience, the people belonging to this section of society vocally discuss and compare the situations in their homeland and foreign lands. The diasporas weave their experiences and often compare them with that of their home country. For instance, an Indian diaspora is very likely to compare Indian cuisine offered at an Indian restaurant in the United Kingdom with that in India. Or maybe, compare the roads and state of tourist infrastructure in India with the United States. Indeed, if you are an Indian, you'll know that drawing comparison is in our genes!

Giving these comparisons a theoretical lens, the book offers objectivity by including the diaspora's perception of 'development' in the Indian tourism and hospitality sector. With this thought, the editors came up with an idea to critically analyse the situation of the Indian tourism sector and explore the potential from the perspective of the Indian diaspora the world over.

Accordingly, the chapters are structured in a way that would take readers from a macroscopic to a microscopic viewpoint of Indian tourism, and Indian diaspora's perception of the current and potential state of tourism in the country. Section A discusses the historical development of the Indian tourism sector over the period, growth in the number of tourists as well as governments' policies and initiatives. Chapter one highlights that despite enormous growth, the metrics, especially the FTAs, are less compared to similar tourist destinations like Thailand, Maldives and Singapore. Chapter two examines several paradigms of the Indian tourism sector that makes it distinct from other countries, such as tourist mechanisms inside the country and various types of tourism industry modelling. The last chapter of section A presents a macro view of the state of research in Indian tourism and hospitality using Bibliographic review, indicating a dearth in addressing several themes and evaluating the effectiveness of Government's initiatives for sectoral development.

Section B provides an objective view of different tourism products offered in India. It includes wellness tourism, rural tourism, gastronomic tours, urban tourism, smart tourism, heritage walks, dark tourism and responsible tourism practices. The authors have discussed these tourist products extensively and attempted to compare and contrast their potential in the light of technology, COVID-19 and sustainability.

Section C puts forward some contemporary topics for discussion, like the impact of climate change. Chapter 13 elaborates that there is an opportunity for India's tourism industry to adapt through physical and policy interventions to make India a more competitive and sustainable tourism destination.

COVID-19 occurred when India's tourism sector was on a strong growth trajectory. Along with other businesses in the service sector, the pandemic posed a serious threat to the survival of the tourism and hospitality industry. The industry suffered huge losses on account of nation-wide lockdowns with subsequent restrictions on the movement of people and transport. Millions lost their jobs,

companies got shut down and destinations observed a situation of zero tourism worldwide. Nevertheless, as the world struggles to survive the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism prepares for resurrection, and encouraging domestic tourism is seen as the first step towards revival. Chapter 14 focuses on domestic tourism and proposes a phased approach for safe tourism, with the 3S (Safety, Security and Sanitation) India campaign and networks between public and private sectors as suggestions for safe tourism amidst COVID-19. To attain long-term sustainability and build resilience in the sector, Chapter 15 discusses several disaster management strategies to be adopted by the Indian tourism sector. The last chapter analyses the relatively low number of international arrivals in India using a multi-perspective approach. It is worth noting that the challenges faced by the tourism sectors of different countries are different. The socio-cultural, economic and political situations vary in emerging countries compared to developed countries. Indeed, not only the promotional but also the revival strategies for tourism and hospitality need tailor-made solutions.

Nimit Chowdhary
Suman Billa
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Nimit Chowdhary
Suman Billa
Pinaz Tiwari